

CABINET 31 October 2013 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEM 11

Report title: Preventing Homelessness Strategy

Wards affected: Citywide

Strategic Director: Netta Meadows/Mike Hennessey, Interim Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods

Report Author: Kevin Mulvenna, Senior Policy & Projects Officer

RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor's approval:

Approve the Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS).

Key background / detail:

a. Purpose of report: Meets statutory responsibility to have a homelessness strategy; old strategy has expired; sets out the strategic direction for homelessness prevention and related services to follow.

b. Key details:

1. The PHS 2013 – 2018 will:

- Provide vision and 'overpinning' policy direction for a range of homelessness prevention and related services provided either directly by Bristol City Council (BCC) or partner agencies or commissioned by BCC from external partners.
- Influence services not under its auspices but which contribute to preventing homelessness e.g. advice, education, health.
- Include revised aims, priorities and outcomes for homelessness and related services.
- Will have a SMART Action Plan with responsible leads. This will be produced after the BCC budget setting in February 2014. It will include full detail of resources to be utilised.
- The PHS is the high level vision and establishes priorities; it allows sufficient flexibility to deliver against these within resource constraints.
- Secure the accommodation that is necessary for people who are or may become homeless.
- Demonstrate how Bristol meets and exceeds the ten local challenges from central government's 'Making Each Contact Count' Strategy.
- Have regard to and be consistent with the council's Tenancy Strategy and its' current (HomeChoice) and emerging allocation scheme.
- Be a 'rolling', flexible strategy through to 2018, but will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is still relevant. It is intended to be a 'living' document used by relevant people to enhance performance around preventing homelessness.
- Link the overlapping of homelessness with other issues e.g. poor physical and mental health; drug and alcohol misuse, offending, domestic abuse etc. and provide interventions.
- Because of the strong correlation with health issues the PHS has been considered (05/09/13) and is supported by the statutory Health and Wellbeing Board.

2. A main body document (Appendix 2) sets out the aims, priorities and outcomes we wish to see around preventing homelessness. It sets the policy context we are operating. It outlines how we will deliver the priorities and outcomes
3. To make delivery of the PHS more transparent and measurable a number of specific actions will be included in a PHS Action Plan. Our Finance Business Partner (BCC internal) has advised us to produce this after the PHS has been approved, as is the norm in most LAs. The intention is to fully cost and resource each action (post BCC budget setting February 2014). The Action Plan along with the PHS will be a dynamic, developing document which will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is relevant while at the same time providing the direction internal service and partner agencies need.
4. A number of other Annexes support the main body. For the Cabinet report these are all within one file Appendix 2 except the Equality Impact Assessment which is Appendix 4.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – One page why we need a new PHS and letter from Executive Members encouraging comments

Appendix 2 – Preventing Homelessness Strategy Main Body document

Appendix 3 – PHS All other Annexes

Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
CABINET
31 October 2013**

REPORT TITLE: PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Ward(s) affected by this report: Citywide

Strategic Director: Netta Meadows/Mike Hennessey, Interim Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods

Report author: Kevin Mulvenna, Senior Policy & Projects Officer
Co-presenter: Nick Hooper, Service Director, Strategic Housing

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Purpose of the report:

Meets statutory responsibility to have a homelessness strategy; old strategy has expired; sets out the strategic direction for homelessness and related services to follow.

RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor's approval:

1. Approve the Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS)

The proposal:

1. The PHS 2013 – 2018 will:
2. Provide vision and 'overpinning' policy direction for a range of homelessness and related services provided either directly by Bristol City Council (BCC) or partner agencies or commissioned by BCC from external partners.
3. Influence services not under its auspices, but which contribute to preventing homelessness e.g. advice, education.
4. Include revised aims, priorities and outcomes for homelessness and related services.
5. Have a SMART Action Plan with responsible leads. This will be produced after the BCC budget setting in February 2014. It will include full detail of resources to be utilised.
6. Outline the high level vision and establishes priorities; it allows sufficient flexibility to deliver against these within resource constraints.
7. Secure the accommodation that is necessary for people who are or may become homeless
8. Demonstrate how Bristol meets and exceeds the ten local challenges from central Government's 'Making Each Contact Count' Strategy.
9. Have regard to and be consistent with the council's Tenancy Strategy and its' current (HomeChoice) and emerging allocation scheme.

10. Be a 'rolling', flexible strategy and be regularly reviewed to ensure it is still relevant. It is intended to be a 'living' document used by relevant people to enhance performance around preventing homelessness.
11. Articulate the overlapping of homelessness with other issues e.g. poor physical and mental health; drug and alcohol misuse, offending, domestic abuse etc. and provide interventions.
12. Council and 'My Home is my Springboard for Life' logos to be added to public versions once approved.

Consultation and scrutiny input:

a. Internal consultation:

Key internal partners CYPS, HSC, public health (with link to NHS more generally) and Safer Bristol are all represented on the Preventing Homelessness Board (PHB) which has discussed and helped frame the PHS. A database of around 200 internal and external stakeholders was e-mailed both prior to work beginning on the PHS and to notify them when it went on Consultation Finder.

Posted on BCC's on-line Consultation Finder for 12 weeks from 10th June until the 28th Aug 2013. The issues raised and fed back from the CF consultation will be included in a report entitled 'You said, we did' which shows how the consultation responses were conscientiously taken into account and informs the final PHS. This will be sent to those who made comment and also posted on Consultation Finder.

b. External consultation:

Also represented on the PHB are key external agencies the six Equalities Fora, Avon & Somerset Probation, Bristol Supported Housing Forum (providers), Bristol Compact (voluntary sector), Homes4Bristol and service users.

Database and Consultation Finder outlined above in internal consultation also included external agencies / individuals. Draft PHS link to Consultation Finder sent to the Bristol Housing Partnership Management Sub, Advice Centres for Avon and the Bristol Supported Housing Forum. There has been consultation with the BCC established equalities fora.

The PHS has gone to the Health & Wellbeing Board (H&WB) for consideration and they have agreed to support it and wish to be kept informed of progress. Poor health can lead to homelessness and a period of homelessness can cause poor health – lots of good joint work in this respect is already being done but we are looking to enhance this further, including through this link to H&WB.

The issues raised and fed back from the Consultation Finder consultation are included in an appended report to the PHS entitled 'You said, we did' which shows how the consultation responses were conscientiously taken into account and informs the final PHS.

Other options considered:

None, a homelessness strategy is a statutory requirement and one of the Government ten local challenges¹.

¹ From the Government's homelessness strategy 'Every Contact Counts – "To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs".

Risk management / assessment:

Ensure a full risk assessment is completed and insert the details here.

FIGURE 1							
The risks associated with the implementation of the (subject) decision :							
No.	RISK Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK (Before controls)		RISK CONTROL MEASURES Mitigation (i.e. controls) and Evaluation (i.e. effectiveness of	CURRENT RISK (After controls)		RISK OWNER
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	The new PHS will not add value i.e. improve delivery of outcomes and priorities	High	Medium	Ensure that the PHS makes a real difference Ensure all partners use PHS as a dynamic delivery tool Clarity around aims, outcomes, priorities and when finalised the Action Plan will give all stakeholders more certainty around direction	Low	Low	Preventing Homelessness Board / Nick Hooper (PHB/NH)
2	PHS will lack credibility	Medium	Medium	Major efforts to get it supported at the highest levels	Low	Low	PHB/NH
3	The PHS will only be seen as the responsibility of a narrow group of service providers	Medium	High	Work with internal BCC and external stakeholders to get truly involved	Low	Low	PHB/NH

FIGURE 2							
The risks associated with <u>not</u> implementing the (subject) decision:							
No.	RISK Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK (Before controls)		RISK CONTROL MEASURES Mitigation (i.e. controls) and Evaluation (i.e. effectiveness of	CURRENT RISK (After controls)		RISK OWNER
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	Bristol will have no up-to-date strategic guide around homelessness	Medium	High	Good practice will continue but efforts will lack clear direction	Medium	High	PHB/NH
2	Censure by Government	High	High	This PHS should meet and even exceed Government expectations	High	High	PHB/NH

Public sector equality duties:

Before making a decision, section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic.
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or

in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the PHS and is attached as Appendix 4.

Equalities and Social Inclusion Team commented: “equalities groups are over represented in homelessness and the strategy aims to identify areas where there are gaps and direct services towards plugging those gaps. These should all be positive impacts but monitoring will be key to make sure that the service customers receive services and their outcomes aren’t poorer because they belong to an equalities group”. The PHS includes how homelessness services will continue to improve monitoring directly and through its’ commissioning.

Eco impact assessment:

It is not anticipated that there will be any significant environmental impacts arising from this proposal.

Advice given by: Steve Ransom, Environment Co-ordinator

Date: 3rd October 2013

Resource and legal implications:

Finance

Ensure this section is written by/signed off by the relevant Finance Business Partner.

a. Financial (revenue) implications:

The revenue consequences arising from the implementation will be contained within existing resources.

Advice given by: Shahida Nasim, Interim Finance Business Partner

Date: 19th September 2013

b. Financial (capital) implications:

There are no capital implications arising from the report

Advice given by: Shahida Nasim, Interim Finance Business Partner

Date: 19th September 2013

c. Legal implications:

s.1 Homelessness Act 2002 requires the local authority to carry out a homelessness review and formulate and publish a strategy based on that review. The local authority must take the strategy into account in the exercise of their housing and social services functions.

The purpose of the homelessness strategy is to prevent homelessness in the authority’s area, secure that sufficient accommodation is and will be available in the area for people

who are or may become homeless and provide support for such people or those who have been homeless and need support to prevent it recurring.

s.153 Localism Act 2011 provides that the local authority must have regard to its current allocation scheme and current tenancy strategy when formulating the strategy. Before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy the authority shall consult such public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons as they consider appropriate. The outcomes of the consultation must conscientiously be taken into account when a decision is made. Cabinet must also consider the equalities impact assessment and ensure that the public sector equality duty set out in the report is complied with.

Advice given by: Sarah Sharland
Date: 6th September 2013

d. Land / property implications:

There are no direct land or property implications arising from this report.

However homelessness is expected to continue rising and the intention to release BCC land to enable the Affordable Housing Delivery Framework (a separate but complementary project) in order to deliver more affordable homes will help meet more of the housing need of homeless households.

Advice given by: Robert Orrett
Date: 28th September 2013

e. Human resources implications:

The aim of this strategy is to use resource capacity to deliver within available resources. In determining the best use and balance of limited resources to assist people at immediate risk of homelessness, there may be a requirement to change the roles of employees, re-evaluate those roles as well as train and upskill employees to deliver to different requirements. Potentially, this could require changes to the current structure in order to effectively deliver the strategy. Therefore, reductions, redeployment and/or redundancy cannot be ruled out.

Advice given by: Sandra Farquason
Date: 21st August 2013

f. Health implications:²

The PHS recognises the overlapping of homelessness with poor physical and mental health and seeks to promote joined up solutions. Because of this strong correlation with health issues the PHS has been considered (on 5th Sept 2013) and is supported by the statutory Health and Wellbeing Board (H&WB). H&WB have asked to be kept informed and involved.

Advice given by: Jackie Beavington, Service Manager, Public Health Improvement
Date: 16th October 2013

² Not a requirement in Cabinet reports but added because of the importance of health in this area

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – One page why we need a new PHS and letter from Executive Members encouraging comments

Appendix 2 – Preventing Homelessness Strategy Main Body document

Appendix 3 – PHS All other Annexes

Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

Access to information (background papers):

None

One page 'Why we are Consulting' on this DRAFT Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS). After the final PHS is agreed this will be replaced with the Executive Summary.

Why Bristol needs a new PHS:

- A new Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement for the council
- The continued economic downturn and welfare reform are expected to lead to increased calls on homelessness and housing advice services (there's already an upward trend), so renewed emphasis on prevention approach needed
- PHS will provide vision, policy direction and prioritisation for a range of services provided either directly by BCC or by partner agencies or commissioned by BCC from external partners
- PHS includes revised aims, priorities and outcomes for homelessness and related services; makes it clear what the strategy seeks to influence
- PHS will have a SMART, fully resourced Action Plan with responsible leads (though this is not the sum of homelessness activity e.g. it will be supplemented by programme of commissioning reviews)
- PHS demonstrates how Bristol meets and exceeds the government's ten local challenges from its 'Making Each Contact Count' Strategy
- Governance (see pages 4 and 12 of 'main body' document:
 - o regular monitoring of the delivery of the PHS's Action Plan will be by the Preventing Homelessness Board (a sub group of Homes4Bristol);
 - o the Health and Wellbeing Board have agreed to actively support the PHS (recognition of the adverse effects on health of homelessness);
 - o final sign-off will be by Mayor/Cabinet
- The PHS is a 'live', 'rolling' and flexible strategy and will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is still relevant
- The PHS recognises the overlapping of homelessness with a range of other issues e.g. poor physical and mental health; drug and alcohol misuse, offending, domestic abuse (see pages 15-16 'main body' for common triggers of homelessness) and provide interventions
- Resources: PHS does not control the use of resources around preventing homelessness and early intervention, but it does decide the priorities and outcomes which BCC and its' partners will strive towards.

The Six Priorities (more detail pages 14-21 of 'main body')

1. Minimise homelessness through early intervention by understanding and tackling the (often complex) reasons behind it, with special emphasis on young people.
2. 'Early Bird' - consistency of approach, timely advice and earlier referrals from all agencies, even ones not always involved with homelessness.
3. Improve: access to, the amount of, stability and quality of the Private Rented Sector (PRS); using homelessness prevention fund, myth busting and encouraging new build, leasing, licensing and accreditation.
4. Continue to assertively tackle rough sleeping; target those clients with complex, multiple needs.
5. Make more direct links between homelessness and the housing, health and wider policy agenda.
6. Ensure the right support is in place and that those ready to do so move-on promptly and reduce repeat homelessness.

4th June 2013

A new Preventing Homelessness Strategy

Letter Encouraging your views from Executive Members

Dear Consultee

As Executive Members whose portfolios are intrinsically linked to effectively tackling homelessness we'd like to encourage you to give your views on the DRAFT Preventing Homelessness Strategy through Consultation Finder.

Of course Homelessness is about a lack of housing, but it's about so much more. Without the right support and options it can be the start of a downward spiral for many. This strategy aims to get all the relevant partners in Bristol working to the same set of priorities and looking to achieve the same positive outcomes for clients.

Why welfare benefits and advice? The massive reforms to the benefits system are expected to lead to homelessness for some, for instance those who can't cope with reductions in benefit or budgeting or who have problems finding affordable accommodation.

Why health? Homelessness can arise because of poor physical or mental health; and a period of homelessness very often has adverse effects on health. We are working to join the solutions.

Why children and young people? Young people are particularly vulnerable when homeless and it's important children in homeless households are still able to thrive. The draft strategy emphasises the importance of acting early to support younger people.

So be part of the solutions, give your view using the pro-forma on Consultation Finder. From our respective portfolios we will be supporting the resulting strategy.

The final strategy will take account of comments received from you and will go to the Mayor and Cabinet for final approval in autumn 2013.

Yours

Mark Bradshaw, Executive Member for Transport, Planning, Strategic Housing and Regeneration

Gus Hoyt, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Environment and Council Housing (with responsibility for the response to welfare reform)

Barbara Janke, Executive Member for Health and Social Care

Brenda Massey, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

DRAFT Main Body document
Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS)
2013-18

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4. DELIVERING PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

ANNEXE A – Action Plan (to be finalised post budget setting Feb 2014)

ANNEXE B – Key Facts and Homelessness Statistics

ANNEXE C – Projects that build together to make this PHS and glossary of terms

ANNEXE D – ‘Making Every Contact Count’ - Government’s Ten Local Challenges

ANNEXE E – Forecasting Demand Paper

ANNEXE F – Checklist from the previous PHS

ANNEXE G – Welfare Reform and Legal Aid Changes

DRAFT

Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2013-18

Foreword

This is Bristol's second Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS) and comes at a crucial period in the economic and political cycle. The state of the economy is putting increased pressure on housing and homelessness services, whilst at the same time, welfare reform and the reductions in Housing Benefit introduced by the government are increasing pressure upon households' ability to manage their finances. Other economic impacts are outlined later in the PHS. Please note the term **household** in the PHS means anything from a single person to a large family.

Major reductions in public spending have increased pressure on both statutory and voluntary sector agencies. It is therefore no surprise that nationally and locally there are strong predictions that the numbers of households presenting as homeless will rise over the coming years.

The period up to 2010/11 saw a steady reduction in homelessness acceptances and an increase in homelessness prevention cases in Bristol. The council and partners also achieved a low level of rough sleeping through positive partnership working. However, over the two year period since there has been an increase in homelessness by most measures and this is expected to continue; partly as a consequence of the ('lagged' effects of the¹) economic climate and partly because of welfare and housing reforms.

This strategy draws on collective experience and achievements to date; and sets out how the council and partners² can build on solid foundations to best use capacity to deliver within available resources. It is informed by the review process which includes all the evidence in the annexes to this report, plus consultation and the response to that consultation (see 'You said, we did' report); and finally all the reviews that have been carried out under the homelessness 'umbrella' of services, making it effectively a 'review of reviews'. Therefore the PHS is transparent about the best use and balance of limited resources to assist people at immediate risk of homelessness and in intervention, advice and assistance to all those potentially threatened by homelessness. This mirrors the council's approach to customers more generally as set out at: [Hyperlink to BCC Customer Strategy](#)

This strategy sets out:

- short introduction;
- aims and outcomes for the strategy and the priorities (and actions) to deliver them;
- strategic context, national, regional and local; and

¹ Homelessness Monitor published by the University of York.

² The 'council and partners' means all those agencies statutory or voluntary who are involved with preventing homelessness; part of this Strategy's early intervention approach is to widen the range of partners

- delivery, how the council and partners will continue to prevent homelessness.

The PHS supports and compliments the city's corporate Housing Strategy (HS) and also links to and supports strategic objectives around e.g. public health, Children & Young People's Services (CYPS)³ and Health & Social Care (HSC). It must be taken into account in the exercise of the councils' housing and social services functions.

The strategy will be supported by an Action Plan (to be Annexe A) that sets out some key actions for the council and partners, and by when, to help deliver the PHS's aims and priorities. The Action Plan will be regularly monitored and updated to ensure delivery of the strategy. A number of other Annexes support the PHS.

1. INTRODUCTION

Format and Scope of Strategy

Welcome to Bristol's second Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS) 2013 - 2018. It has been developed in partnership by Bristol City Council (BCC) with the Preventing Homelessness Board (PHB) (see Annexe C - Glossary) and following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

What's in a name?

It's called the Preventing Homelessness Strategy - not the Homelessness Strategy - to emphasise that it's not just about responding to homelessness after the event, though that is crucially important, but about proactive intervention as early as possible to stop homelessness. This strategy is part of a process to move all agencies working with those at risk of homelessness away from crisis response and towards the earliest intervention. From the client's perspective "the longer you are left without help, the more difficult it will become to get back on your feet"⁴.

Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to publish a Strategy based upon a review of homelessness in their area. It is a five-year, 'rolling' strategy; 'rolling' means it will be a flexible strategy reviewed at least annually, especially the Action Plan. It won't be changed for its own sake, but if it needs reinvigorating because of changing priorities (e.g. in response to emerging national housing and related policy changes) then it will be.

The PHS will influence and be influenced by the Bristol's multi-agency Housing Strategy, Health & Wellbeing Strategy, and the BCC Corporate Strategy, more below.

Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken for this PHS, the EqIA process is informed by the PHS and the review which underpins it and vice versa. The action it engenders must ensure services are available to all equalities groups. Young people are a major focus of priority 1 but race, age, gender, maternity

³ Including its' Children & Young People's Strategy which in turn encompasses/links to the child poverty agenda

⁴ A Place To Call Your Own – Homeless Link

and pregnancy, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership and gender reassignment are all considered where required in planning for services. Because this is a living, regularly reviewed Strategy an objective is to try and future proof it for changing demographics.

The gender specific, housing related needs of homeless women in Bristol were considered by the University of Bristol in 2010⁵. Recommendations from this Study have informed the commissioning of homelessness services e.g. the need for emotional and physical safety and the recognition of the complexity of homeless women's lives. There is separate provision for women where this is needed – including emergency beds for those in crisis such as women sex workers. Domestic abuse is another area where women (the majority of those affected) need to be found safe accommodation. Domestic abuse is given as an example of a multi-agency response (page 11) led by Safer Bristol. Agencies looking to prevent and respond to crime, work hand in hand with agencies preventing/responding to homelessness as they are often inextricably linked. Services as provided may not always be a perfect fit with service as needed so the council is open to looking at ways to resolve this.

For all equalities groups the tendering process allows examinations of equalities policies but also monitoring of service use and practice to ensure services are welcoming to a diverse range of clients. Commissioning plans have specifically asked for specialist training for staff on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues to ensure they offer the right services. The review of the council's in-house homelessness, advice and prevention services (HAPR) (pages 14 -15 under Priority 2) is committed to improving monitoring for those services.

Gypsies, Travellers and other 'less settled' communities are known to have much worse health outcomes than the population more generally (see Page 18 of Annexe C).

A Well Supported Strategy

Political commitment

In one of his earliest statements after becoming Bristol's first elected Mayor, George Ferguson said "Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a key priority for the city".⁶ The PHS is a strategy owned beyond the council and within the council it is owned by all departments and has corporate commitment (page 10).

The PHS is approved by the Mayor/Cabinet and formally supported by the Bristol's Health and Wellbeing Board (H&WB); supported by the H&WB because of the important connection between homelessness and health issues. The PHS and its Action Plan will be monitored by the PHB ('Governance' page 12)

Partners must not underestimate their successes, examples include:

⁵ Mapping Study of Services for Homeless Women in Bristol – University of Bristol, School of Policy Studies

⁶ Press release 19/12/2012

- Bristol's continued minimal use of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) despite higher demand (but use now rising); and
- 45% of all empty homes returned to use being used for preventing homelessness.

2. AIMS, PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

PHS Aims

Resolve and prevent homelessness with innovative, practical and proactive early intervention

Provide integrated and accessible services that enhance life chances and encourage independence

Deliver focussed, preventative support and in doing so stop the escalation of homelessness issues, reduce repeat homelessness and significantly reduce the call on other statutory duties⁷

Secure the accommodation that is necessary for people who are or may become homeless

See also aim for young people on page 14.

PHS Priorities

Six key priorities have been identified for this PHS based on current work and from consultation with partners:

1. Minimise homelessness through early intervention⁸ by understanding and tackling the (often complex) reasons behind it, with special emphasis on young people⁹.
2. 'Early Bird' - consistency of approach, timely advice and earlier referrals from all agencies, even ones not always involved with homelessness.
3. Improve: access to, the amount of, stability and quality of the Private Rented Sector (PRS); using homelessness prevention fund, myth busting and encouraging new build, leasing, licensing and accreditation.
4. Continue to assertively tackle rough sleeping; target those clients with complex, multiple needs.
5. Make more direct links between homelessness and the housing, health and wider policy agenda¹⁰.

⁷ E.g. less likely to have to use Accident & Emergency services

⁸ E.g. work in schools, support for those in debt

⁹ This emphasis on young people coined as 'Early Intervention Squared', this is a classic example of needing to 'catch them young'

¹⁰ Think ahead (future proof) all related policy and physical development for all tenures

6. Ensure the right support is in place and that those ready to do so move-on promptly and reduce repeat homelessness.

Also relevant (across all priorities)

All housing advice and homelessness services will play their part to mitigate the negative impacts of welfare and housing reforms.

Primary Outcome / Outcomes

Primary outcome

- Reduce homelessness, especially prevent crisis homelessness, youth homelessness and repeat homelessness

Secondary outcomes

- Encourage employment, education, training and/or volunteering
- Reduce re-offending
- Reduce drug and alcohol misuse
- Promote good physical health, mental health, psychological wellbeing, healthy relationships and healthy lifestyles
- Ensure personal safety (e.g. need for appropriate, safe accommodation)
- Enable sustainable accommodation and lives¹¹

This PHS will also contribute towards and align with 'outcomes' from the Housing Strategy. Link to Summary.

http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/housing/find_a_home/affordable_housing/Bristol%20Housing%20strategy%20Summary%20JULY%202011_0.pdf

What are outcomes for? – All agencies providing homelessness and related services need to ask: 'are my actions contributing to achieving these outcomes'? The council and its partners will develop long-term monitoring around outcomes including what works locally?

Approach

Bristol's approach to homelessness will be to act in a proactive and integrated way with statutory and voluntary sector partners to ensure services are complementary, efficient and effective in adding value to improve people's lives.

Partners will strive to maximise the housing and other opportunities available to all clients, including those threatened with homelessness, despite the challenging economic and financial climate.

BCC has reviewed, or is in the process of reviewing and commissioning internal and external homelessness services to prepare for increased and emerging need and to provide greater value for money.

¹¹ Includes in the sense of not losing their accommodation

Holistic approaches will be adopted where complex needs¹² exists. Of particular importance to Bristol is the bid for Fulfilling Lives (Lottery) funding (page 17). A successful bid would really help agencies in the city to better assist those clients with the most complex needs. This issue has been the subject of research by Heriot Watt University who have called it multiple exclusion homelessness; such research will help agencies develop better intervention approaches.

<http://www.sbe.hw.ac.uk/research/ihurer/homelessness-social-exclusion/multiple-exclusion-homelessness.htm>

BCC's Customer Strategy is also relevant, **an objective** is to deal with low complexity, high volume, universal services as cost effectively as possible and invest time and money in services for 'at risk' and 'high needs' customers. Link at page 2.

Guiding Principles

BCC and partners will:

- achieve value for money
- help people to help themselves (build resilience)
- make services responsive (services fit clients, not clients fit services)¹³
- have a unified response (preventing homelessness through effective partnership working)
- prevent and reduce homelessness while achieving wider outcomes (page 5)
- focus intervention and support for those most at risk of homelessness
- provide well regarded services/positive customer experience

For examples of the cost effectiveness of homelessness prevention see page 10

All homelessness services are being periodically reviewed whether delivered by external to the council partners or by the council directly, see Annexe C.

Strategic context

This second PHS provides an overarching framework ('overpinning') and sets the direction for the future delivery of homelessness services. In particular the strategy provides the context for aligning corporate and other partner activity to its six priorities. It also has a role in helping stakeholders understand homelessness in a non-technical way. One voluntary sector partner described the way co-operation works: "to contribute through advice and support with our clients, our best understanding of realistic housing options...and cooperate fully with other agencies..."

The PHS will be delivered and monitored most visibly through its' Action Plan, which will be an engine for delivery and improvement. The Preventing Homelessness Board has primary (but not sole) responsibility for ensuring it is delivered and is deliverable. Tackling the causes and effects of homelessness is important, since homeless people are among the most socially excluded and because their lives can

¹² People experiencing complex and multiple problems with high levels of need (defined as mental health, homelessness, offending and substance misuse)

¹³ This is not just about saying 'one size **does not** fit all' but ensuring services are appropriate for women, for ethnic minorities etc. see Equality Impact Assessment Annexe H.

become far worse without the help of positive interventions. They are often excluded from 'life chances' such as education, employment and good health.

The PHS will influence work with partners, including housing associations, to maximise the supply of decent, affordable homes in the city. The council along with its partners will build on initiatives to further reduce severe overcrowding and make better use of existing homes. In 2013/14 BCC and partners will undertake a review of the HomeChoice Allocations Scheme in the light of the new flexibilities in the Localism Act. The resulting scheme will be aligned to Bristol's wider strategic housing objectives. This PHS has regard to the existing allocations scheme whilst at the same time influencing the emerging scheme (see Priority 5 on page 17).

The PHS will demonstrate how in Bristol the ten local challenges of the government's Homelessness Strategy 'Making Every Contact Count' are being met and exceeded. This is demonstrated throughout this strategy and more specifically at Annexe D; e.g. Bristol has also adopted the 'No Second Night Out' approach to rough sleeping, a key part of 'Making Every Contact Count'.

In an environment of cutbacks this PHS shows how the council and partners are working effectively for households threatened with homelessness. Partners will use the good practice and evidence therein to win resources from sources such as the Lottery, government and to develop shared services e.g. with health¹⁴.

3. POLICY CONTEXT - NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL

National

In August 2012 the government published a homelessness prevention strategy 'Making Every Contact Count: a joint approach to preventing homelessness'.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7597/2200459.pdf

The strategy posed ten local challenges; these are set out in Annexe D with a brief response as to how Bristol is progressing against them. However Bristol's PHS as a whole addresses the ten local challenges and much more.

In 2010 government announced proposals to reduce public expenditure as part of their plans to cut the structural budget deficit. The context for this strategy is a period of severely reduced public spending and significant welfare and housing reform, details of which are set out below. These changes will have a significant impact upon the ability to respond to the above challenges and sustain Bristol's progress towards an intervention/prevention approach to homelessness and provision of support those who need it.

¹⁴ A useful source of emerging practice to influence how things go forward locally will be the NHS Commissioning Board who are working on a national charter to encourage health and housing organisations to work closer together. Source: Inside Housing 23/11/12). There is already much good practice around this in Bristol.

Welfare Reform and Legal Aid Changes

The 'knock-on effects of welfare reform are leading to more homelessness. This is reflected elsewhere in this PHS. A number of other reports have explored this. More in-depth detail of this is at Annexe G. [Include LINKS to reports.](#)

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 outlines significant changes to the way housing services are delivered to households in need and represent the most significant changes to housing in a generation. Key changes include:

- **Social housing:** social housing providers will be able to offer fixed term tenancies of no less than two years for new tenants. In its' Tenancy Strategy the council has stated that there should normally be a minimum tenancy term of five years and lifetime tenancies for some groups e.g. older people in sheltered housing. The PHS has regard to and is consistent with the Tenancy Strategy.
- **Homelessness:** local authorities will be able to fully discharge their duty to secure accommodation for homeless households through an offer of a suitable property in the PRS. It is unlikely that BCC will make mainstream use of this new power, preferring generally to use access to the PRS for homelessness prevention rather than for crisis-led discharge of its' statutory homelessness duty.
- **Housing Allocations:** local authorities have been given the freedom to decide whether to continue operating an open housing register or introduce local eligibility criteria which would determine who qualifies for social housing. Consultation around Bristol's HomeChoice Allocations Review starts in 2013.

More information can be found on the CLG website at:

www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1896534.pdf

Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England

Published in November 2011, the Coalition Government published its housing strategy, a copy of which can be found on the CLG website at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingstrategy2011

Key implications for the PHS are from the Localism Act summarised above and the No Second Night Out programme see page 16.

Regional

The West of England¹⁵ local authorities (LAs) work closely together and monitor homelessness trends across the sub-region. All four LAs have identified that securing emergency accommodation, particularly in Bristol is getting more and more difficult. Over the past two years they have all seen an increase in households approaching them for help and assistance although statutory homelessness acceptances have not risen significantly. There has also been increasing difficulty

¹⁵ Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset and North Somerset

accessing the PRS in Bath where there is no market for local housing allowance claimants, there are similar areas in Bristol and polarisation of the PRS is shown in Annexe B. LAs within the Avon & Somerset Rough Sleeping Group will be carrying out peer reviews about how successful each council has been at meeting the government's ten local challenges.

Local

This new Preventing Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan will support delivery of Bristol's Housing Strategy (HS) 2010-2015. A copy of the HS can be found on the council's website at:

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/housing-strategy-2010-%E2%80%93-2015>

This PHS is aligned to the priorities of Bristol's HS especially:

- accessing the PRS in ways to better meet housing need;
- ensuring quality advice and intervention by all housing agencies; and
- delivering as many new affordable homes as possible.

The PHS also aligns to the city's 20:20 Community Strategy's key outcomes and actions. The council and partners cannot realistically achieve the 20:20 outcomes 'reduce health and wealth inequalities' or 'raise the aspirations and achievements of children, young people and families' if they don't assist those threatened with homelessness.

The PHS supports the corporate parenting responsibility of the council to care leavers and help for those on 'the edge of care'. BCC has undertaken work to ensure the council's in-house Homelessness Advice & Prevention Review, First Response and Troubled Families¹⁶ projects all link up.

The PHS links to BCC's Corporate Strategy and in particular to the 'homes and communities' and 'a flexible and enabling council' priorities. This first priority recognises the diversity of housing needed and the second the fact that services and support need to be integrated with input from those receiving them. The values in the Corporate Strategy also inform the PHS, for example "cooperation - we will work together with our partners..." and "creative – we will be flexible, innovative and proactive..."

BCC now has responsibility for leading health planning for the city and the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy includes preventing homelessness as one of its goals under the theme of "Bristol is a city where health inequalities are reducing". The importance of integrating health and housing responses to those threatened by homelessness and improving access to services and support are priorities/goals of both strategies.

¹⁶ Homelessness Advice...Review see page15; First Response is a CYPS led project to set up a multi-agency Bristol Children First Response Team as the first 'port of call for all requests for help or concerns about children /young people; Troubled Families is a Govt programme led by CYPS in Bristol to assist 'Families' in serious crisis and includes out of work parents, children who are not in school or commit crime and members who are persistently involved in anti-social behaviour. Unless helped, certain factors - commonly debt, homelessness, mental health issues, domestic violence, poor parenting, illness or substance misuse can prevent a family from moving forward.

Bristol's Response to national policy

In addition to developing this PHS, the council and partners have a number of key projects designed to help mitigate the negative impacts of welfare and housing reforms introduced by the government. A corporate programme has been set up to identify the households impacted by the changes, and what actions can be taken to help them prepare for the reforms and become more resilient. The council has also worked with a range of partners (some listed below) to raise awareness of the changes and to seek feedback on the areas to focus on locally.

Bristol is also committed to increase the supply of housing options that will benefit homeless households; this strategy's priorities reflect that. Supported by the Mayor Bristol wants to make a 'step change' in the delivery of new, genuinely affordable homes. From a peak of 561 affordable homes built in 2009/10, 300 were achieved in 2012/13 and a further fall is expected in 2013/14. The Mayor wants to reverse this downward trend by achieving in the region of 600 homes in 2016/17.

Corporate Approach

The PHS is a statutory, corporate strategy for BCC with sign-up by all departments but also owned by a wider 'external to the council' group of stakeholders. This corporate approach is vital to tackling the causes and impacts of homelessness. This is linked to the corporate recognition of the importance of housing to a household's health and wellbeing providing a 'springboard for life'. All customer facing council departments¹⁷ are represented on the PHB and will sign up through the Board. Co-ordinated activity is required to address certain areas for example domestic abuse/violence and re-offending – and to ensure early intervention (e.g. at prison release) to minimise the potentially damaging and costly effects of homelessness on health, educational and economic outcomes for residents. The increase in the number of homeless and large families with children is causing real problems as large accommodation is difficult to access in both the PRS and the social sector and welfare changes are making housing particularly unaffordable for large families (Annexe G page 28 'Effects of Welfare Reform').

The cost effectiveness of early prevention

Research by Heriot-Watt University calculated:

- the cost of preventing someone from becoming homeless was £1,700 compared with the £5,300 cost of helping someone after they become homeless
- the average cost of running a deposit bond scheme, where the council lends money for a rent deposit, was 37 times cheaper than the average cost of dealing with a statutory homelessness case

An advice note from Communities and Local Government department, 'demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of preventing homelessness', published in 2010, outlines the cost savings too:

¹⁷ Neighbourhoods & City Development; Children & Young People's Services; Health & Social Care; Public Health

- The cost of mediation - for example, resolving family disputes to avoid someone becoming homeless - is nine times less expensive than finding someone new accommodation
- Advice on housing options, such as how to solve benefit problems or helping people to manage their finances (i.e. debt advice, benefit take-up), is also estimated at nine times less expensive than finding someone new accommodation
- The costs of a rent deposit scheme are estimated to be eight-and-a-half times less than the costs of providing accommodation under the main homelessness duty.

Bristol’s Homelessness Prevention Fund which pays for deposits, deposit bonds and rent in advance loans, to help households who are homeless/or threatened with homelessness into the PRS represents a better quality of life option because it secures proper homes for people rather than more temporary solutions such as B&B. There need to be clear, ‘joined up’ value for money assessment of alternative ways of accessing emergency and temporary housing. In the first instance sustainable solutions need to be pursued for homeless larger families and this is likely to be reflected in the Action Plan. Homeless Link has concluded that – ‘Homeless people use a variety of public services in an inefficient and costly way’. Preventing a homeless episode or ensuring speedy transition into stable permanent housing can result in significant cost savings, as well as dramatic improvement to the lives of homeless people.

Governance

The governance arrangements for the PHS are that it will be monitored and further developed by the Preventing Homelessness Board (PHB).The PHB is a sub group of the Homes4Bristol Partnership¹⁸. Because of the very detrimental effect homelessness has on people’s health the new Health and Wellbeing Board have agreed to endorse and champion the PHS. This will get homelessness issues to ‘the heart’ of the health agenda. The PHS is a statutory requirement of each local council so final approval will rest with the Mayor and Cabinet. The Neighbourhood and Communities Scrutiny Commission¹⁹ have also considered the PHS.

Key fora and partners

Preventing homelessness is done by a range of partners to achieve this strategy’s priorities for tackling homelessness.

All working parties / groups around homelessness (who don’t already have one) should develop an action plan. This encourages tangible achievements and accountability.

Multi-agency Partnerships	Preventing Homelessness Board – brings together the key statutory and voluntary agencies to help tackle homelessness on a more strategic basis, includes service
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¹⁸ Bristol’s multi agency Strategic Housing Partnership

¹⁹ A commission of ‘backbench’ councillors which holds BCC to account

	<p>user representation</p> <p>Homes4Bristol – Bristol’s strategic housing partnership</p> <p>Bristol Housing Partnership – all major housing associations in the city</p> <p>West of England Housing Options Group – links LAs across the sub region</p> <p>Bristol Supported Housing Forum – supported housing providers in the city</p> <p>Private Rented Sector Working Group – inc. private landlords, agents and tenants</p> <p>Joint Planning Board for Welfare Reform & Advice Provision</p> <p>Youth Housing Delivery Group (YHDG)</p> <p>Reducing Re-offending Board and Bristol Offender Accommodation Forum</p> <p>(Shelter arranged some service user consultation)</p> <p>Supporting People Strategic Management Board</p> <p>Meaningful Occupation Group</p> <p>Ad hoc Case Conferences as required</p>
Internal Council Partnerships	<p>Housing Benefit – Discretionary Housing Payment Working Group</p> <p>Customer Services Point of Contact Meetings</p>
Other Statutory Agencies	<p>Avon & Somerset Police Service</p> <p>Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust</p> <p>Clinical Commissioning Groups²⁰</p> <p>Department for Work & Pensions (Job Centre Plus)</p>
Non statutory agencies	<p>The six Equalities Fora</p> <p>Community groups</p> <p>Advice Centres for Avon - housing advice agencies (on Homes4Bristol)</p> <p>VOSCUR - voluntary sector agencies</p>
Service users specifically	<p>Have been a major part of the commissioning reviews which inform this PHS</p>

4. DELIVERING PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

There are significant challenges arising from recent housing and welfare changes, and public expenditure cuts that will require working even harder in collaboration with partners to ensure Bristol can find sustainable solutions for those threatened with homelessness and other households in housing need in the city. Partnership working and early intervention underpin the delivery of the aims and priorities in this PHS.

Bristol partners want to stop homelessness, because tackling the causes early will reduce the social and economic burden on households who experience or who are

²⁰ Via the Health & Wellbeing Board

at risk of it, and for society in general. To do this, services need to be regularly reviewed against agreed outcomes and partners need to work collaboratively to provide a range of good quality services that deliver the outcomes required. Advice agencies including the council's own Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service (WRAMAS) are carrying out a lot of work identifying unclaimed entitlement, assistance with claims, and dealing with problems, including appeals to tribunal.

1. Minimise homelessness through early intervention by understanding and tackling the (often complex) reasons behind it, with special emphasis on young people.

The more effective solutions are not necessarily the most expensive. Emergency options (e.g. B&B) are, by their very nature, less planned, and often expensive and poorer quality.

Keeping people in their existing homes if they are suitable and sustainable is imperative. The council and partners will encourage and work with housing providers to improve tenancy sustainment and resilience. All sorts of tenancy sustainment work (e.g. extra money advice, financial inclusion work and assistance for new applicants and existing tenants) is operating in the social sector; and low level floating support services already operates in the social and private rented sectors. It is vital these are used effectively for clients and to sustain and initiate tenancies. BCC believes it is essential to help sustain communities. To help mitigate the impact of welfare reform, BCC and partners have been helping people to either remain in their existing homes through negotiation with landlords or be provided with advice on alternative, affordable housing options.

Bristol Mediation works in partnership with 1625 Independent People to provide mediation for people to:

- Sustain their current tenancy;
- Return home to family, friends or relatives to allow time to move to independent accommodation in a planned way;
- Maintain/increase their confidence in sustaining independent living.

Improving homelessness prevention and intervention is a key driver of a review of in-house homelessness, advice and prevention (known as HAPR for short) services which is currently underway (more detail under 2. below). The review included consideration of a 'diagnostic tool' that households threatened with homelessness and their advisors could use.

The PHS has coined the expression 'Early Intervention Squared' for intervention with young people (YP). This PHS favours early intervention for all clients, but recognises that for YP stopping homelessness at the start of their 'housing journey' and the right, early action can avoid them getting into 'a cycle of homelessness' and improve their life chances. Some YP will be 'households' in their own right and other YP and children will be 'dependents'.

Bristol Youth Links is the name for (12-17) youth provision in the city, the contracts for these services include early warning of potential housing issues as well as related issues such as illegal drug use. Link to Youth Links web page:

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/bristol-youth-links>

The trend among providers in the social rented sector has been towards self-contained accommodation. BCC has begun a dialogue with social landlords to consider some shared units to mirror the situation in the PRS more generally. BCC's Private Renting Team are looking at working with landlords of multi-occupied dwellings. There is some evidence that there may be some surplus former student housing in North Bristol from 2013. The safety and quality of properties will of course be paramount.

The council and partners need to address the 'transition' issues of access to housing for young people in the 18 + age group, currently in young peoples' services but now needing to access services via adult care; this includes those with mental health issues or undiagnosed learning difficulties, or diagnosed with ADHD²¹.

Partners including CYPS will look at the possible effectiveness of early intervention work with excluded from school children and 'missing from home' children. Both these actions will be referred to the Youth Housing Delivery Group.

More generally partners need to ensure services support CYPS's aim "Bristol's children, YP and families grow up in strong communities and are well supported to enjoy their lives, to learn, to develop and have successful futures".

The massive fall in the use of B&B for YP is strongly linked to the use of crash pads. A mini review of crash pads is proposed answering the questions how effective are they and are there enough?

Partners will be encouraged to provide/access services to get homeless people out of the cycle of unemployment by preparing them for a return to work and other meaningful activity and to integrate this with other interventions.

BCC and partners identify the underlying factors that lead to homelessness in order to target available resources at appropriate initiatives that will help tackle these and build resilience. Early intervention means tackling the shared trigger points of:

- age (youth specifically)
- drugs and alcohol issues
- domestic abuse
- exclusion from services due to behaviour (incl. school)
- generational homelessness
- generational worklessness
- learning disabilities
- leaving care
- leaving the armed forces
- lone parenthood (incl. teen pregnancy)
- mental ill health
- offending
- physical ill health
- rent arrears

²¹ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- sexual abuse (in childhood and adulthood)

2. 'Early Bird' - consistency of approach, timely advice and earlier referrals from all agencies, even ones not always involved with homelessness.

A major review of homelessness, advice and prevention (HAPR) is underway to improve:

- the experience of people receiving those services
- make services more consistently efficient and effective
- improve customer information (for customers and about customers)
- make services more evidence based
- make maximum use of appropriate ICT.

The HAPR includes renewed impetus for the Early Bird headline action from the HS which is all advice agencies and even some agencies not always considered as advice agencies 'pulling together' to intervene early in potential homelessness cases. This approach would help to deliver priority 1.

The HAPR is consistent with the BCC Customer Strategy work referred to on pages 2 and 6. A number of BCC agreed design principles will inform its' reviews and commissioning. Three are featured here, and they inform the services which deliver this PHS.

- Customers at the heart of what we do
- Source best network of providers (external or internal)
- Pursue a shared service services agenda (for appropriate processes)

3. Improve: access to, the amount of, stability and quality of the PRS; using homelessness prevention fund, myth busting and encouraging new build, leasing, licensing and accreditation.

The PRS has been an increasing source of good quality, accessible accommodation over the past five years. Local Housing Allowance (LHA), reforms will make access to a sustainable and adequate supply of homes in the PRS much more challenging. For the last two years the number of PRS lets BCC has been able to procure for people in need has remained stable at about 355 per year, but was higher in 2009/10. There is increasing polarisation in the PRS in Bristol and the majority of the sector caters for open market rentals. When LHA was restricted to the bottom 30% of the PRS market it was estimated 7,500 properties²² were taken outside the reach of households on benefits.

Bristol will look at the feasibility of Private Leasing schemes – successfully being used in other LA areas – with outputs of: priority for households that might otherwise have faced homelessness and longer term tenancies. With so much demand for access to the PRS it is hoped leasing-specialist providers will be able to attract landlords to house more vulnerable households.

²² Guardian

Welfare reform presents significant challenges for young single homeless people and their ability to obtain accommodation in the city. Supported housing providers have expressed their concerns about the lack of move-on accommodation for many of their residents. The Move-on Policy Project seeks to address this, see page 19.

Improve the stability of the PRS – in dealings with private landlords BCC will seek to encourage use of longer term (up to five year) tenancies e.g. Shelter's Stable Rental Contract.²³ BCC would also seek to encourage longer tenancy periods through private leasing in the city. At present too many households are 'falling out' of the PRS with some presenting as homeless.

See also the possibility of more shared accommodation on page 14 above.

There needs to be particular attention to how bonds and deposits could work for ex-offenders to access the PRS. This is likely to be referred to Bristol Offender groups for their Action Plan linked to the PHS.

BCC convenes a PRS Working Group with landlords, tenants and agents. Part of its remit is to make the sector work better for all parties. One on-going action of this Working Group is to dispel the myth that tenants on benefits equals less desirable tenants. Helping households to access the PRS has been and will continue to be a major plank of the prevention approach in the city.

4. Continue to assertively tackle rough sleeping; and target complex needs.

For clarification, these two client groups have been included in one priority but the PHS recognises that they are two distinct client groups and certainly not all rough sleepers have complex needs or vice versa. Preventing rough sleeping and addressing their needs is being spearheaded by Bristol's local 'No Second Night Out' (NSNO) project delivered by St Mungo's and funded by BCC over three years, this is helping keep numbers as low as possible. The Compass Centre delivers a range of services to homeless people and those threatened by homelessness: a range of medical and mental health services (akin to a specialist GP plus service for homeless people), employment and meaningful activities projects such as the Bridge the Gap.

Partners will also look at local/national info exchange to see how the needs of rough sleepers who have no recourse to public funds can be better met (likely to be in Action Plan). BCC will examine whether street counts – at different times, including of those 'living the lifestyle though not necessarily asleep' might help refine partners' understanding.

With the rise in rough sleeping during 2012/13 (average 9.2, as high as 13 in one monthly count²⁴), meetings were held between BCC and St Mungo's to address issues and develop joint working. Actions included:

²³ A five year contract for the PRS would bring it into line with new fixed term tenancies now offered in some cases in the SRS

²⁴ Nine monthly counts from Jul 2012 to Mar 2013

- St Mungo's Alcohol Worker has linked up with BCC's Streetwise Team and is working with street drinkers in the Stokes Croft area.
- NSNO Senior Co-ordinator and NSNO Case Worker started with the team and are liaising with Jamaica Street hostel and Logos House around providing a mini hub for clients (funded through the Homelessness Transition Fund).
- Coordinated approach to working with vulnerable long term rough sleepers who do not want to be placed in hostels has been established.

A 'Fulfilling Lives' BIG Lottery bid²⁵ led by Second Step (a supported housing provider in Bristol) could secure up to £10m over eight years (potentially from 2014) to put in place a more systematic approach to helping service users with the most complex needs. This has fantastic potential to assist a 'client group' which has been a major concern.

5. Make more direct links between homelessness and the housing, health and wider policy agenda.

This priority is about ensuring that the housing needs of those affected by homelessness are 'at the table' when policies (leading to services) are being designed. Examples include designing the Allocations Review and deciding the priority for the type of homes built as part of the 'step change' increase in affordable housing supply. It's also about continuing to do what Bristol has been 'good at' and that is recognising that the approach to one area of activity (e.g. education, employment) has knock on effects for homelessness further down the line. A 'Bristol Housing Futures' project by the University of the West of England, the Bristol Housing Partnership and BCC is forecasting future change in demand for housing and developing solutions to meet that demand.

Linking housing and health responses is of major importance as poor health (physical and/or mental) can lead to homelessness and a period of homelessness often exacerbates and causes further issues. Support services commissioned by BCC are taking an holistic approach to their clients needs that includes a psychologically informed approach that just accommodation is not the answer and that deeper issues such as health need to be addressed too. Public health is represented on the PHB, and the NHS fund health service for homeless people at the Compass Centre as a primary care service. Hospital discharge workers operate from the BCC housing advice team to ensure people leaving hospital have the housing and support they need. The business case for getting the health needs of homeless and vulnerable people treated early is being progressed as the alternative is often accessing much more expensive services such as A&E departments. It is important that homeless households should have access to the same services as other households where this is the best option. For example in September 2013 the NHS Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group got the 'green light' to explore how to extend the services for 'End of Life Care' for homeless people in Bristol. This would include training for hostel workers and support for the clients.

²⁵ Not to be confused with a completely separate Fulfilling Lives Lottery bid in Bristol to help address loneliness for older people

6. Ensure the right support is in place and those ready to do so move-on promptly and reduce repeat homelessness.

Funding for supported housing in Bristol comes mainly through what used to be known as the Supporting People (SP) programme. This was a ring-fenced budget from government that was to be spent on 'housing related support'. The ringfence was removed in 2009 and now the money is paid as part of the area-based grant. Each LA can determine how much money to spend.

In Bristol short-term support (expected to be for up to two years) is provided in two distinct areas (table below) and funding for long-term (likely to be permanent) support e.g. sheltered housing and for disabled people is in two other areas. 'A strategy for people with mental health needs, learning difficulties and autism' is currently being developed by the council and will link to this PHS and the Housing Strategy. Spending against these areas is overseen by a Strategic Management Board (SMB) while the work is carried out within the relevant division.

	BCC department	Value 2013/14
Preventing homelessness short-term services	Neighbourhoods & City Development	£8.99 million
Safer Bristol (drugs and alcohol, domestic abuse)	Neighbourhoods & City Development	£1.7 million
Older people and physical and sensory impairment	Health & Social Care	£4.3 million
Mental health and learning disability	Health & Social Care	£5.4 million

Preventing homelessness services (historically commissioned through SP) are all being commissioned in line with the Enabling Commissioning Framework which seeks to ensure that outcomes are achieved for individuals by having the best possible services in place at the right price. There is an ongoing cycle of 'analyse, plan, do and review'.

The preventing homelessness 'pot' is reducing but homelessness is increasing and likely to continue do so.

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
£10.6 million	£9.8 million	£8.99 million	£8.67 million

BCC has re-commissioned (or is re-commissioning) all preventing homelessness services. The purpose has been to ensure that there is a strategic fit between all services, but also making the most of providers' own expertise and ability to innovate. These services include a pathway that will support people away from homelessness towards greater independence – clients can enter the pathway at whatever stage is most appropriate, but they are supported to move towards social and economic inclusion²⁶.

²⁶ Homelessness prevents many households from feeling part of and contributing to society

In the commissioning process and in this PHS, BCC and partners want to harness the best practice that is going on in the field, want services to complement one another, and be part of a strategic whole. To achieve this tender specifications for reviews have encouraged a focus on outcomes. Reviews specify services that focus holistically on people's independence, work in a psychologically informed way to improve the wellbeing of clients and staff, and make use of peer expertise - through peer support, and ensuring that clients play a central role shaping of services.

The commissioned services have been divided into workstreams, for more detail of the reviews see Annexe C.

Progressing these reviews

This review work is carried out by the Commissioning and Policy; Housing Services team overseen by the PHB. Decisions are taken by the Service Director, Strategic Housing (following recommendations from the PHB) unless they are key decisions (e.g. over £500k) in which case they are taken by the Mayor. If there is a tender, an evaluation panel assess the tenders and then make a recommendation to the Service Director who will make the decision.

Risks - The approach presents significant challenges to both BCC and providers; Commissioning and Policy team can provide details.

Advantages - The Enabling Commissioning Framework allows BCC to be confident that the right providers are in place so that the sector is best placed to meet the key challenge of decreasing budgets at a time of increasing need.

The Housing Support Register (HSR) ensures fair and effective usage of a range of supported housing , access to family and young parents accommodation will now also be managed thru' the HSR.

Move-on from temporary accommodation - The lack of suitable move-on accommodation for those ready to move into independent accommodation is a major barrier to reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation (TA). This leads to many households particularly single people waiting in TA for their 'ideal' which is social housing. The new Move-on Policy aims to address this through changes to Bristol's pre-existing Priority Move-on Scheme, the introduction of PRS access scheme and encouraging providers to develop and utilise creative solutions to move-on through the commissioning of new low level support services where a commitment to this will be required. A bespoke Action Plan is being developed to deliver the Move-on Policy Project; it will be linked to this PHS's Action Plan.

Also relevant (across all priorities)

All housing advice and homelessness services will play their part to mitigate the negative impact of welfare and housing reforms.

With significant changes to welfare benefits and housing reforms, partners need to communicate well and minimise the impact on residents and service providers. This will be achieved by working with partners and other key stakeholders, including

resident representatives. BCC including its WRAMAS will also continue to organise events that provide information and support for homelessness providers and housing and debt advice agencies as well as community groups and residents who are likely to be most affected.

A key area of concern for the voluntary sector is the impact of debt upon the incidence of homelessness. Tight household finances raises the prospect of households not being able to afford rent / mortgage payments or other essential household bills, including fuel; with benefit reductions these pressure will be further compounded.

It will also be increasingly important to provide support for working and non-working households to find ways to maximise their incomes. This has implications for the delivery of housing services and service redesign may be necessary to provide the necessary protections for residents and social housing landlords. For example: enhanced housing options services to include advice on affordability and budgeting, providing welfare benefit entitlement and employment advice to social housing tenants as part of core housing management services. See Annexe G for more detail on the Welfare Reform changes.

Use of Homelessness 'Reserve'

As part of the high support commissioning process £1m was set aside in case of a significant upsurge in homelessness. £200k is being used for the Homelessness Prevention Fund in 2013/14 (page 11). The remainder is to be used for a number of proactive solutions. These would need to be projects where 'seed funding' puts in place a service which then is self-sustaining going forward. Ideas could be:

- Avoid move towards more institutional settings / fund self-sustaining initiatives to minimise impact if increase in numbers of e.g. rough sleepers, homeless families with children
- Encourage solutions from partners – offer seed / pilot / leverage funding, opportunity for innovation and good practice 'grants'

Both the above guidelines have the potential to make partnership in the city even closer.

Larger families

If partners don't plan very carefully the challenges and costs of homeless larger families may become 'the perfect storm'. A combination of Universal Credit, exempt accommodation rules and the expectation of greater demand in this area (see Annexe E) all combine to make this a major problem to be proactively managed. For this reason a project specifically to find VFM solutions (as sustainable as possible) will probably be in the Action Plan and needs to kick off ASAP. This will include the council and partners working to source larger family accommodation (possibly some re-modelling of existing accommodation) as an alternative to expensive emergency accommodation or even B&B.

End of Priorities section *****

Consultation feedback

In order to produce this new PHS (and modify the city's approach to preventing homelessness) there has been consultation with statutory agencies²⁷, voluntary organisations and other appropriate people.

There are three main strands of consultation that has taken place on this PHS:

- a) Developing it under the auspices of the PHB
- b) Carrying out a survey at the early stages to gauge partner expectations
- c) Posting the draft PHS on the council's Consultation Finder site for comment

The consultation from the PHB and the 'partner expectations survey' is already reflected in the PHS and the Draft that was posted on Consultation Finder (CF). A more detailed report on the partner expectations survey is available on request.

The issues raised and fed back from the CF consultation will be included in an Annexe to the PHS entitled 'You said, we did' which will show how the consultation responses were conscientiously taken into account and inform the PHS.

Funding streams

The delivery of the actions set out in this strategy will rely upon the resources of the council and partners. To maximise combined resources it will be important to work together, sharing expertise and good practice, avoiding duplication, identifying and meeting gaps in provision, jointly funding or procuring projects and making joint bids for any available funding streams to secure additional resources to help tackle homelessness in the city.

The context is challenging: less money, increasing demand. Social / affordable housing not keeping pace with demand and there are access barriers to PRS. Innovation and seizing opportunities will be crucial too and Bristol's homelessness partners have a good track record of this.

In terms of the direct resources the council's total budget for the three teams most directly providing homelessness services in 2013/14 is £2.2m. These are the Housing Advice, Private Renting and Single Point of Access teams.

The gross cost of finding PRS housing for households threatened with homelessness (deposits, rent in advance etc.) in 2012/13 was £344k with £199k in unrecovered costs carried over from previous years. The gross cost of B&B in 2012/13 was £193k but almost 83% was recoverable through Housing Benefit.

£8.99m of support services (the former Supporting People grant) pays for short term accommodation ranging from homeless hostels to women's refuges, as well as range of floating support. This budget is no longer 'ring fenced' and an ongoing saving of about 3.5% is required each year (pages 18-19).

²⁷ AKA "public authorities"

DCLG Homelessness Grant - in 2013/14 this was just under £1.1m and the indicative amounts available for the next two years are at the same level. Over 68% of this is used to purchase service provided by external to the council partners e.g. the services at the Compass Centre (page17); 30.5% pays for services directly delivered by the council e.g. hospital discharge posts.

Partners also provide services for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness which provides additional resources not accounted for above, including floating support and supported housing services.

Implementation of this Strategy

The PHS Action Plan to be finalised after BCC budget setting in February 2014 will be at Annexe A and will set out key actions for the council and partners over the period covered by the strategy.

Not least with significant welfare and housing reforms still 'working thorough' and the uncertainty around their full impact at a local level, it will be prudent to review the Action Plan regularly to ensure the actions and available resources are effectively targeted at delivering good outcomes in terms of homelessness intervention, prevention and supporting those who do become homeless.

The PHB will monitor the Action Plan at least six-monthly and help undertake its annual review/refresh and measure progress against delivery of priorities.

DRAFT Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS)

ANNEXE A – Will be the fully resourced PHS Action Plan (to be completed after the BCC budget setting in February 2014).

ANNEXE B – Key Facts and Homelessness Statistics

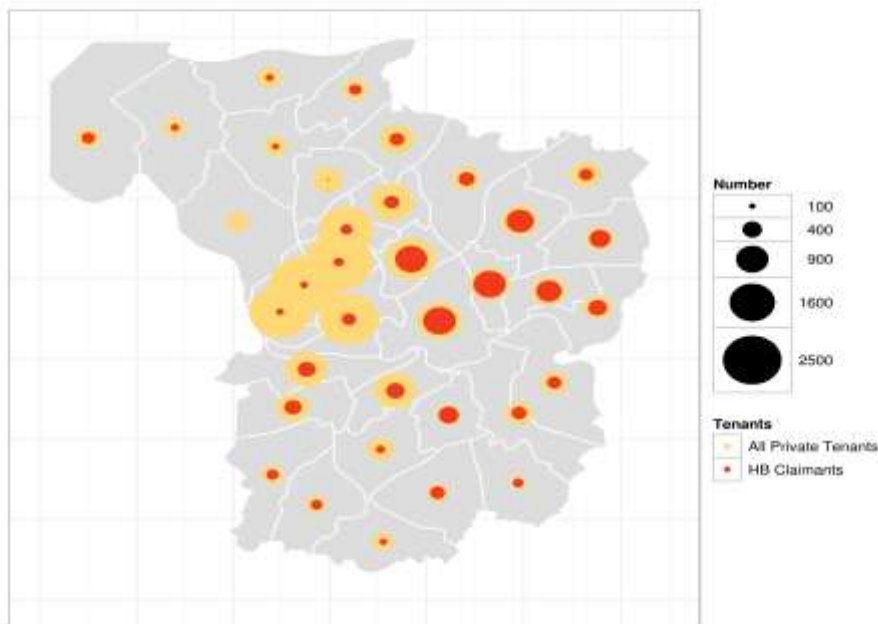
Housing Supply

2011 Census - there are 182,700 dwellings in the city, 20% is social housing and 23.5% is private rented housing. The private rented sector (PRS) is the fastest growing housing sector rising from 14.2% in 2001, a growth of 98.5% in ten years, almost doubled.

The table below shows the rise in PRS rents for the bottom 25% of properties those available to those on HB.

Lower Quartile Rents	Room	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
March 2012	280	497	625	720	1,100
June	295	500	650	725	1,100
Sept	290	500	630	725	1,150
Dec	285	500	625	725	1,196
March 2013	300	500	635	750	1,250
Annual Inflation	7%	0.6%	1.6%	4.1%	13.6%

Source: VOA Quarterly Statistics Residential Rents



This Map shows the size, location and most importantly the 'polarisation' of the PRS market in Bristol. It indicates the proportion of the market which is supported by HB LHA benefit in different parts of the city. Changes to welfare benefits suggest this polarisation trend will intensify.

Source: BCC Benefits/Alex Fenton LSE

The level of owner occupation at 54% is lower than the national average of 66% (2011/12). Despite the recent, relative stabilisation of house prices post recession, Bristol is still one of the most difficult cities in Europe to afford to buy a flat or house. The EU's Urban Audit places Bristol in the most unaffordable fifth of major European cities for buying a home.

Demographics

13% of the working age population are not working including through incapacity, the unemployment rate is 6.8% lower than the national average of 8.1% but higher than the South West average of 6.2%;

13.5% of residents belong to black and minority ethnic communities.

30% of those taking part in BCC's Quality of Life survey 2011 describe themselves as having a disability or impairment and this % has remained extremely stable for the last 5 years. Disability has been measured in the Census and whilst the % has fallen the number of people has increased 'who are disabled or whose day-to-day activities are limited' has risen.

2001: 64,741 (17.8%) 2011: 71,724 (16.7%)






Deprivation and poverty

There are high levels of deprivation within Bristol with 16% of residents living in areas of the city ranked amongst the most deprived 10% of the country.

27% of Bristol's children live in poverty and 60% of children in one inner city ward.




Bristol's Housing Strategy (see page 9 of main body PHS) sets out in more details an analysis of housing statistics for the city. Also available annually is a document called the 'State of the Housing Market in Bristol' which captures key housing trends in the city.

2012-13 and 2013-14 Report Card Summary

PI Ref	Description	Report Period	Target 12/13 & 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Outcome v Target
NH 401	Number of people sleeping rough on a single night in Bristol	Quarterly	Q1-Q4: <8 Q1: <10	11	11	9	10	17	
NH 402	Number of homeless households helped by the housing advice service (per 1,000 households)	Cumulative Quarterly	Q1: 3.75 Q2: 7.50 Q3: 11.25 Q4: 15.00 Q1: 4.50	4.8	9.5	13.9	18.3	6.8	
NH 404c	Average number of people in B&B	Quarterly	Q1-Q4: 0 Q1: 0	1.3	5.6	5.6	4.5	9.94	
NH 405	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Quarterly	Q1-Q4: 150 Q1: 180	159	161	162	181	202	
NH 423	Number of households who would be otherwise homeless sustaining tenancies	Cumulative Quarterly	Q1-Q4: 90% Q1: 85%	97%	96%	95%	95%	92%	

Strategic Housing indicators (related to homelessness only)

Value For Money indicators (related to homelessness only)

PI Ref	Description	Report Period	Target 12/13 & 13/14	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Outcome v Target
NH481	Average Move-On Time in High Support Accommodation Services	Quarterly (days)	Q1-Q4: 114 Q1: 120	150	197	154	74	116	
NH482	Average Void Time in High Support Accommodation Services	Quarterly (days)	Q1-Q4: 2.0 Q1: 2.0	3.2	2.9	5.2	3.8	3.1	
NH483	Average Percentage of Planned Departures from High Support Accommodation Services	Quarterly	Q1-Q4: 60% Q1: 75%	64%	65%	61%	59%	59%	

Start of regular, annual Homelessness Trends report

Homelessness Trends in Bristol 2011/12 (April 2013 edited and updated)

This next part of the Keys Facts & Homelessness Statistics annexe is an edited version of a freestanding report that is produced annually and covers performance on homelessness acceptances, prevention cases, temporary accommodation figures and rough sleeping. This section will be updated at least annually.

Background; Homelessness Acceptances and Prevention Cases

Prevention of homelessness is achieved when the applicant is assisted to remain in accommodation or provided with alternative accommodation. Despite the increase in applications and acceptances, the council and partners have sustained a good level of success with its approach to homelessness prevention. BCC will monitor the impact of the upward trend in demand upon the overall ability to successfully prevent homelessness as e.g. further benefit reform comes into effect. The ability to procure alternative accommodation is impacted by the availability of accommodation at rents that may be covered by HB LHA.

Updated performance on homelessness acceptances, prevention, temporary accommodation figures and rough sleeping (in the graphs below) and other related subjects.

Performance

- Homelessness acceptances under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) were 324 in 2012-13 (see Graph 1) which represents an increase of 8% from 2011-12 and 34% on 2010-11. This is part of a national trend in increasing levels of homelessness and these levels are set to increase over the next few years as a result of the impact of the welfare reform in combination with the economic downturn.
- The number of cases where homelessness was prevented for at least six months by internal and externally commissioned services for 2012-13(April-Dec 2012) was 3,480, a 15% increase on 2011-12 (see Graph 2). The most significant

increase has been in preventing households from losing their accommodation. All agencies are finding it increasingly difficult to prevent homelessness through securing PRS tenancies because of competition for housing in this sector.

- The Housing Advice Team has seen a marked increase in demand for services. Referrals have risen by about 30% over the last three years (see graph 4)
- The marked increase in demand from homeless households approaching services has seen a consequent dramatic increase in homelessness acceptances and preventions (see graph 5)

The Homeless Prevention Fund has been critical in assisting housing advisors to secure alternative accommodation through deposits and rent in advance in the PRS. This fund is crucial to securing PRS accommodation to discharge the council's homelessness duty to households through an offer in that sector. This funding is also used to prevent homelessness by allowing households to stay in their own properties. Without this fund, there would be large increases in statutory (Part VII) homelessness and the need to use emergency/temporary accommodation including B&B.

Reducing the use of Temporary Accommodation (TA)

BCC has a statutory duty to place households in accommodation when they present as homeless whilst enquiries and being made as to whether the household is owed a homeless duty or if that duty has been established and they have no other accommodation that they could reasonably occupy (Homeless at Home). In quarter (Q) 4 2012-13, there were 181 households in TA at the end of the quarter, a 12% increase on Q 1 2011-12. Please refer to Graph 6. However this is a 44% reduction on from the high point in Q2 2008.

Use of Bed & Breakfast (B&B)

B&B accommodation is sometimes used as temporary accommodation when no other suitable accommodation is available e.g. hostels. The number of households in B&B has dropped enormously from historical levels. However there are now consistently 10-15 (mostly childless households) in B&B with some shared facilities which is a 50% increase on April 2012. To alleviate the increase in family homelessness and prevent the need to use B&B BCC has increased access to alternative, self-contained TA for households with children.

B&B is used much less often than historically for single people due to the success of the Emergency Units ('crash pads'), particularly those for 16 and 17 year olds in order to end the use of B&B for these vulnerable young people. Funding for mediation for 16-17 year olds to negotiate a return to the family home has been identified as a priority in the 'Wraparound' Review and anew contracted service is now in place. A graph that shows the use of B&B for comparative quarters from 2003-13 can be found in Graph 7. It has been reducing since 2003/04 but now since 2009/10 has started to creep up again.

Rough Sleeping

The incidence of rough sleeping in the city increased in the early part of 2013 and has been above the level set by government of 10 or below (see Graph 8); this follows a national trend as the recession and welfare reform begins to make an impact. St Mungo's have adapted their service recently in the following ways to seek to reduce the number of rough sleepers:

- The St Mungo's Alcohol Worker has started working with BCC's Streetwise Team and is working with street drinkers in the Stokes Croft area.
- The establishment of a No Second Night Out (NSNO) service in Bristol in response to the government's publication of 'No Second Night Out' nationwide, a programme that aims to ensure that those people new to rough sleeping have no need to spend more than one night on the streets, and are helped into accommodation quickly. St Mungo's have a service in place in Jamaica St funded through the Homelessness Transition Fund and this will be assimilated into the Compass Centre contract when the new tendered service is in place in October 2014.
- A more coordinated approach by BCC housing advisors and St Mungo's in working with people being evicted from hostels and coming out of prison is now in place.

St Mungo's conduct weekly hotspot counts every Thursday night which enables the team to engage effectively with all rough sleepers and to move rough sleepers off the streets as soon as possible. The Compass Centre contract that St Mungo's successfully tendered for has been extended to September 2014 after approval by Cabinet on the 20th December 2012. A new service will be put out to tender and will be in place for October 2014.

Repossessions

The number of households approaching BCC in mortgage difficulties continues to remain low with just 39 households from April to Dec 2012 of these 39 households, 29 (75%) had homelessness prevented through advice and mortgage options and only 10 (25%) had a homelessness duty accepted.

The Bristol Court Desk service which is coordinated by BCC through funding from DCLG will continue to operate. The service ensures that there is a duty solicitor available at all the sessions in Bristol courts for mortgage or tenancy repossessions and is effective in preventing repossession orders leading to homelessness. The funding has been moved to the Ministry of Justice who have tendered out the service to South West Law.

Hidden Homelessness

See Annexe C page 18

Preventing Homelessness Commissioning

BCC commissions a range of services to prevent homelessness. These include short-term accommodation-based services and floating support services and complementary “Wraparound” Services. As at quarter Q4 2012/13 BCC has:

- Put new contracts in place for most of the high support services. These are services working across Bristol to new specifications which will improve the experiences of people recovering from homelessness. The final contract is being evaluated and will start in Nov 2013.
- Awarded new contracts for lower support accommodation. These will start in Oct 2013. The original process did not yield sufficient accommodation for women. To remedy this, there is another process taking place to find these now, with a contract start date of Jan 2014.
- Approved the final Commissioning Plan for Wraparound Services in Mar 2013. Grant agreements have been signed for services that assist homeless households to find work. Contracts have been awarded for mentoring and mediation services that seek to prevent homelessness and tenancy breakdown, the tendering process for the Compass Centre is underway.
- Developed a Commissioning Plan which is looking at any gaps in the homelessness pathway following the completion of the higher support, lower and floating support and wraparound commissioning. This plan will be consulted upon from Sep to Nov 2013, with any new services being in place in Aug 2014.
- Consulted on a draft Commissioning Plan for specialist accommodation and support services for younger people with higher support needs.
- Completed the evaluation of proposals to deliver floating support and young parents support services. Service began in Jul 2013 and contracts have been awarded to four providers.

Homelessness Advice and Prevention

See page 13 of main body PHS

Welfare Reform

See Annexe G

Work to mitigate the negative impacts of the Welfare Reform

A major impact of Welfare Reform which BCC is currently trying to mitigate is the Benefit Cap particularly related to families with children especially large families. The 30 most affected were visited earlier in the year and the lessons learnt from that exercise is being rolled out to the remaining families. In total there are 378 families affected – 178 are in social housing so they are being contacted by either Landlord

Services or their housing association. BCC is recruiting a visiting officer and a co-ordinator to visit the 200 families accommodated in the PRS to ensure they are aware of the Cap and options available to them.

The work of the Private Renting Team:-

- The 4 bedroom LHA cap had a significant effect on 36 large families renting privately in Bristol. A group was been established to develop an action plan to identify suitable solutions including landlord liaison, sourcing larger properties, temporary leasing of properties and tailored welfare benefit advice. All families were contacted and were worked with actively.
- Has also been working closely with the Welfare Benefit Reform Programme Team. Other initiatives that will mitigate against the effects of the reforms and look to reduce homelessness include:

Other changes include:

- improvements to the BCC customer service phone system are being made in preparation for increased phone calls about the benefit changes
- Voluntary and Community Sector organisations have been met with and information is shared and disseminated with them to work together to support people affected negatively by implementation of Welfare Reform
- working in partnership with two charitable organisations that are in the process of developing PRS leasing schemes in Bristol, in order to increase the amount of good quality stock available to the Private Renting Team's clients, including larger families.

Bristol successfully bid to the DWP on behalf of the four sub-regional unitary authorities securing £470k (LHA Transitional Fund) to mitigate the adverse effects of the changes to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). Changes to the LHA presented a challenge in particular with the increase in the shared accommodation rate from under 25 (years of age) to under 35 which affected around 950 people. To mitigate against this BCC appointed a housing advisor to work with this group and prevent homelessness.

All those affected have had at least two letters advising them of the change and requesting them to contact the service. A breakdown of the results of this is available.

Landlord Services have appointed four new senior housing advisors to help council tenants prepare for change of the spare room subsidy AKA 'bedroom tax'. A letter was sent to the 3,500 council tenants expected to be affected, asking them to let us know their plans. BCC is working closely with local housing associations, sharing data and information to help tenants prepare.

National Trends:

Household acceptances

- During the 2012/13 financial year there were 53,540 acceptances which is an increase of 6% on the previous year. In Bristol there was an increase from 299 to 324 acceptances which is an increase of 8% in homeless acceptances over the same period.

Households in temporary accommodation

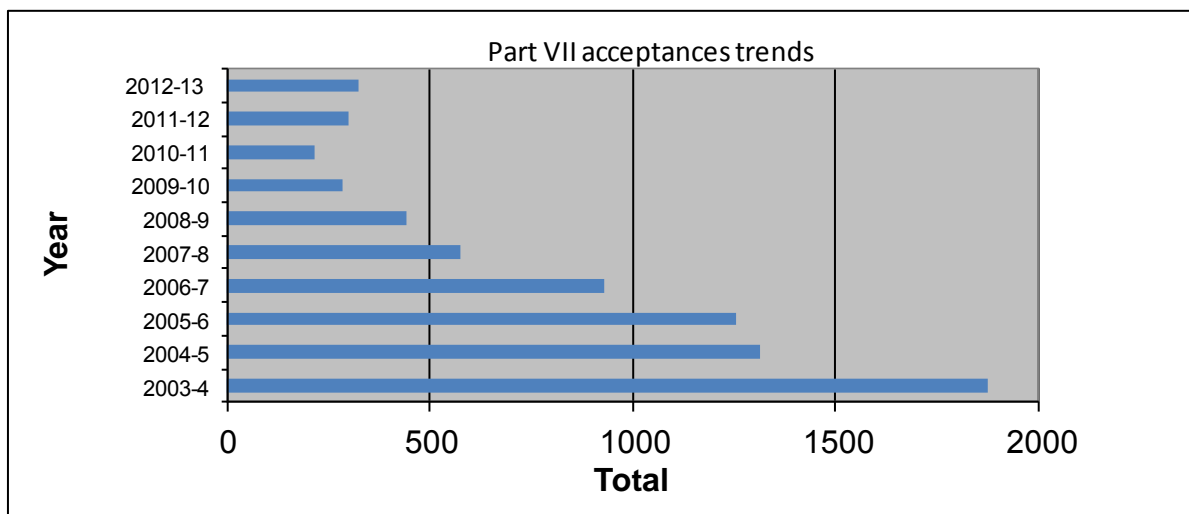
- Nationally 55,300 households were in temporary accommodation on the 31st March 2013. 10% higher than at the same date last year. In Bristol there were 181 households in temporary accommodation on the 31st March 2013 which is 16% higher than at the same date last year.
- Nationally 8% of temporary households were in B&B style accommodation. An increase from 3,960 to 4,500 which is an increase of 14% compared to the same date last year. In Bristol there has been an increase in use of B&B accommodation from two on April 1st 2012 to 16 on the same date this year (2013).

Conclusion to homelessness trends section

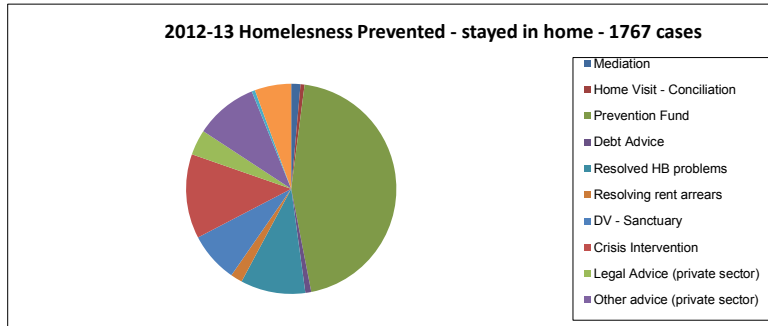
The national trend in increasing levels of homelessness and rising numbers seeking assistance has been recognised as a key corporate risk. Strategic Housing teams are investing time and resources into re-commissioning homelessness services to try and reduce costs whilst also achieving better outcomes. BCC and partners are also re-designing services to more effectively manage the increasing demand for services and advice from homeless households.

There is a need to continually monitor homelessness trends in order to actively respond to and target resources at increasing levels of homelessness and emerging needs.

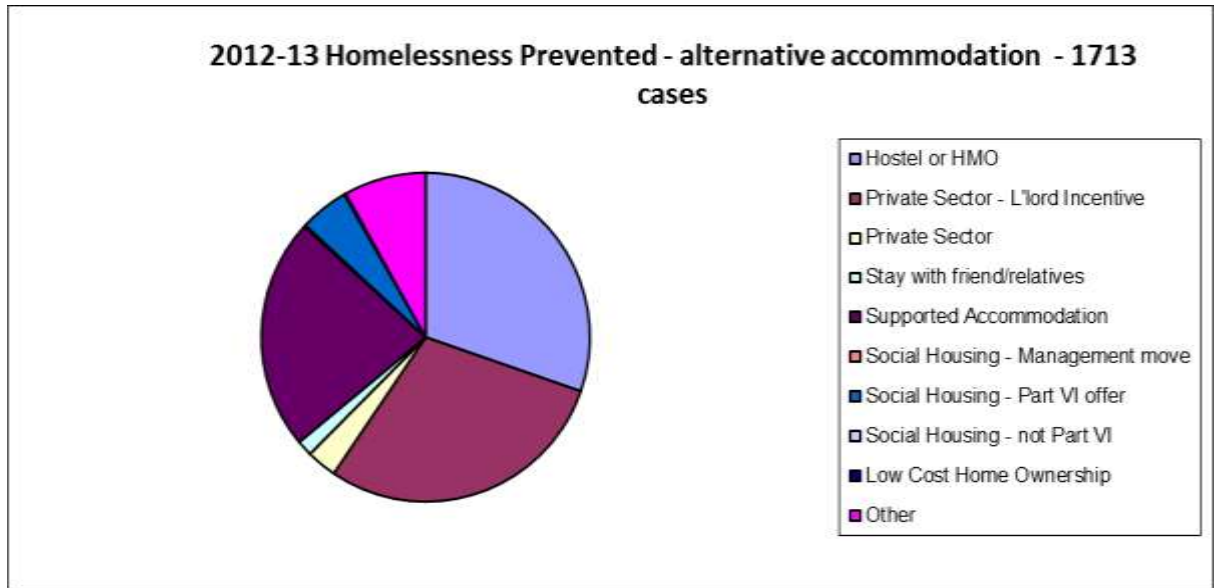
Graph1: Homelessness Acceptances (Part VII)



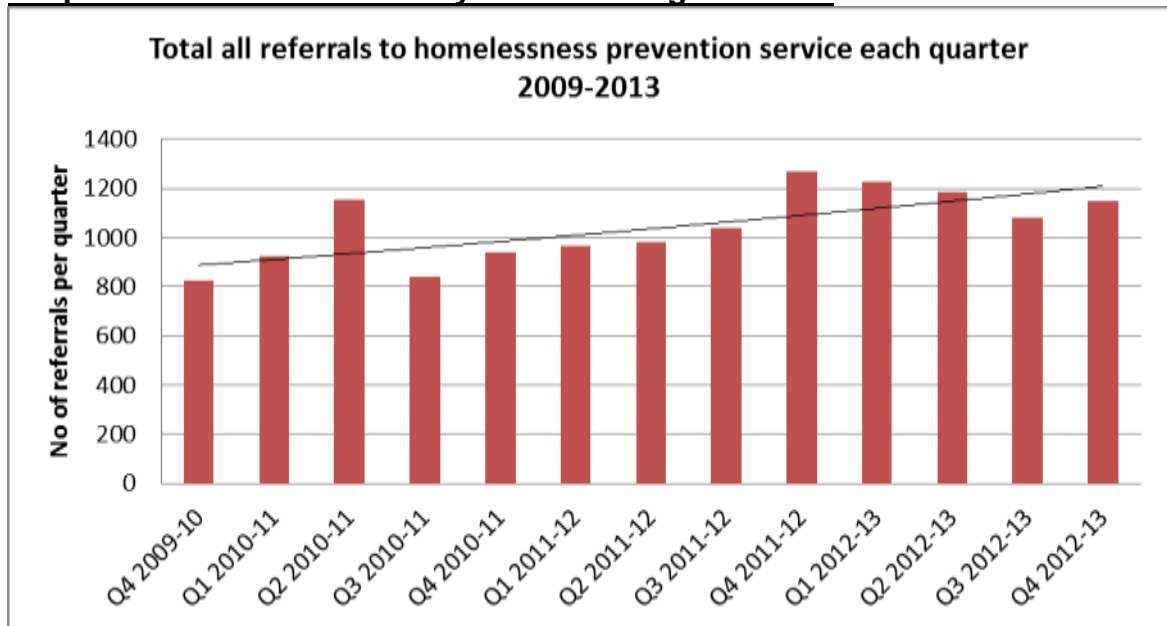
Graph 2: Q1-3 2012-13 Homelessness prevented - stayed in existing home, as a result of:



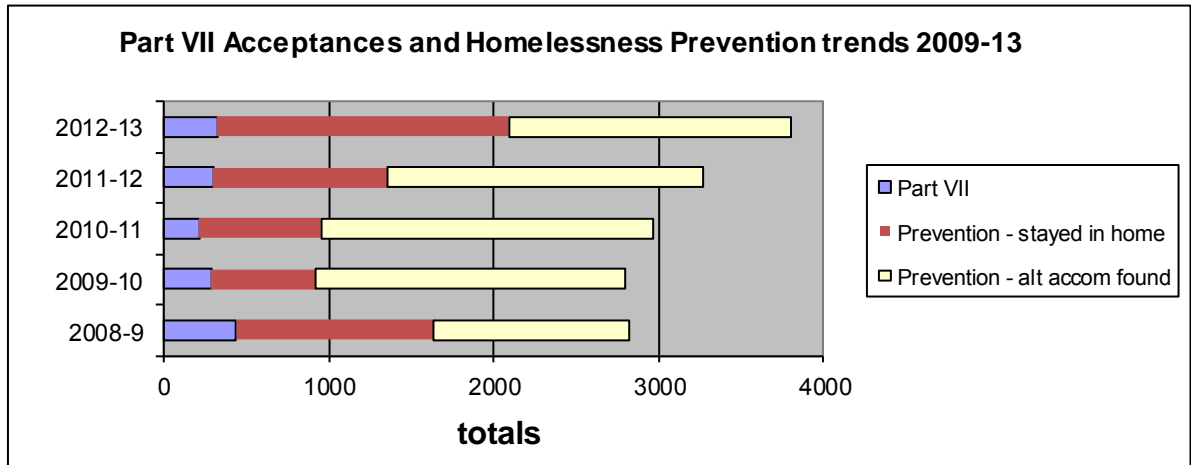
Graph 3: Q1-3 2012-13 Homelessness prevented – alternative accommodation found, in the form of:



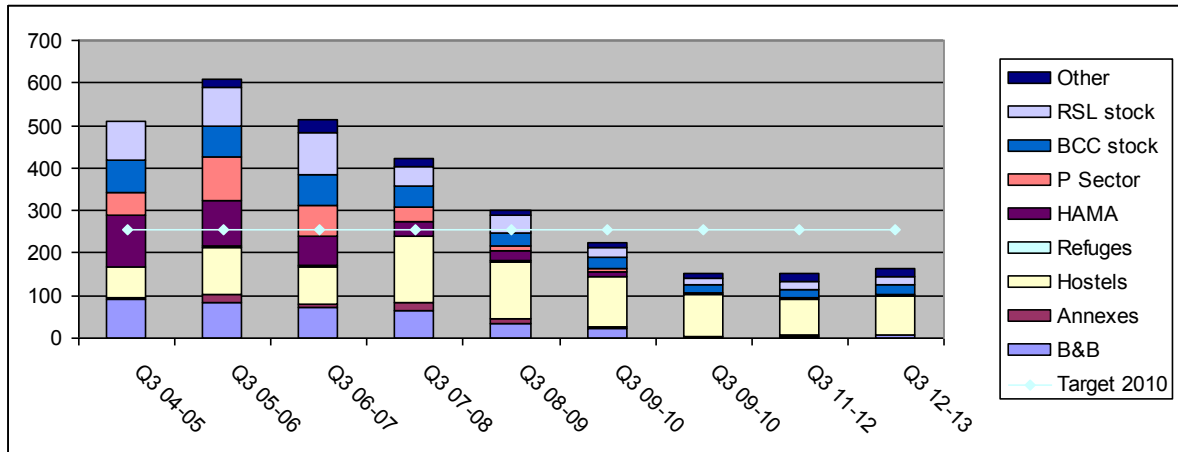
Graph 4: Referrals received by BCC Housing Advisors



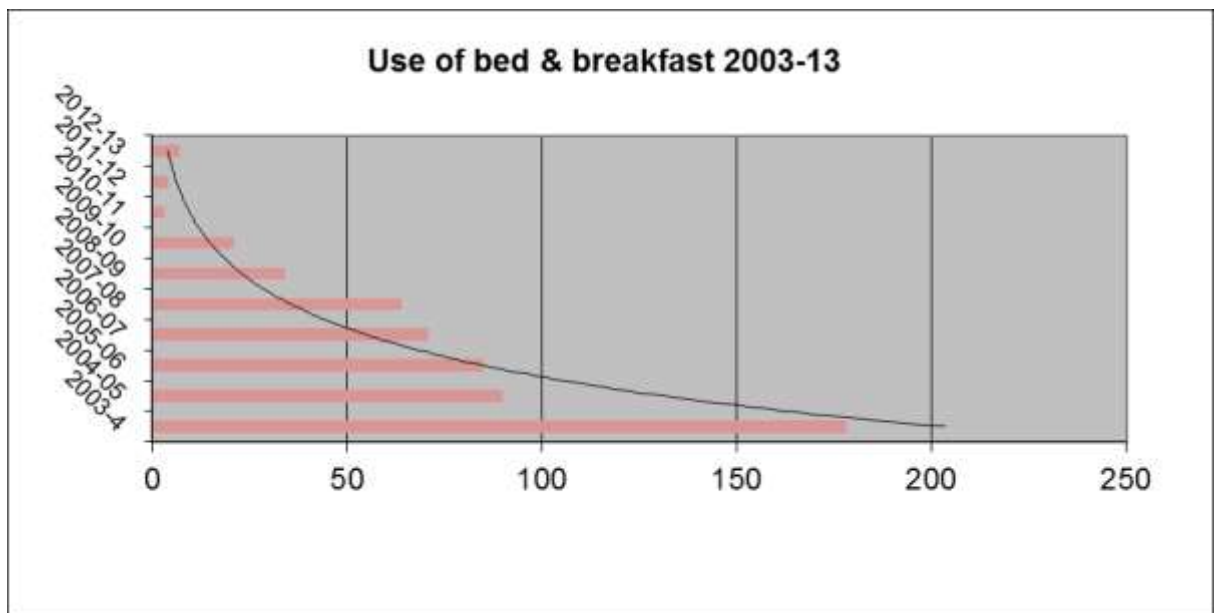
Graph 5: BCC Part VII acceptances & preventions



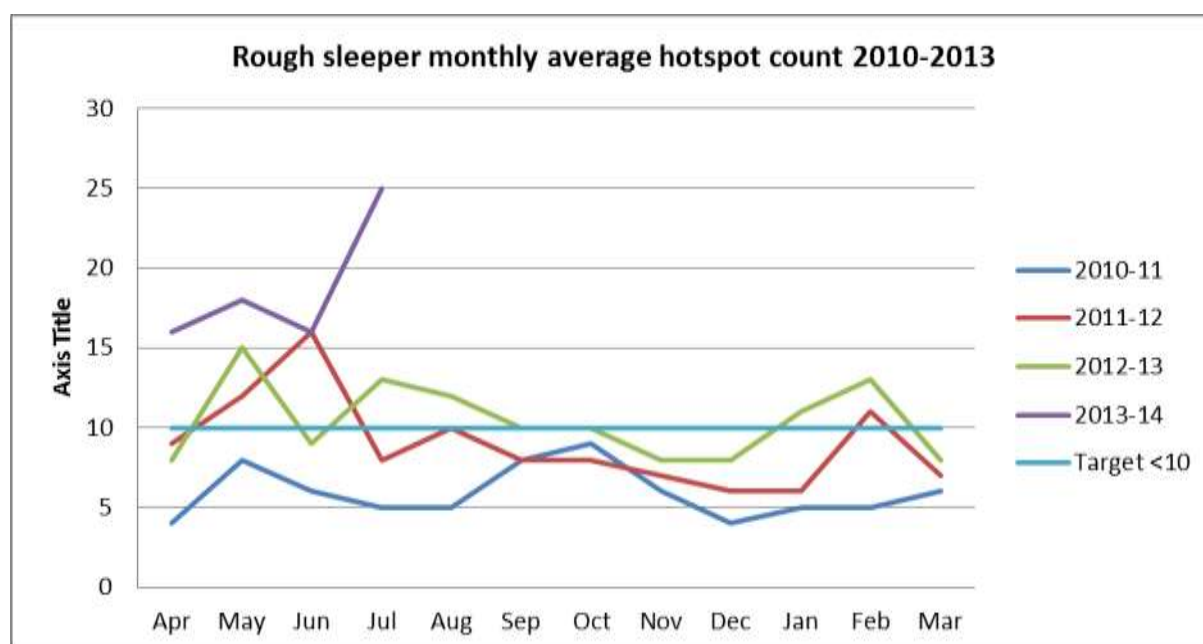
Graph 6: Households in Temporary Accommodation



Graph 7: Use of B&B 2003-13



Graph 8. Rough Sleeping Counts



End of Homelessness trends freestanding report

Types of prevention / intervention

Can take a number of different forms:

- Tenancy sustainment work by social housing providers – this will flag up signs of problems e.g. rent arrears; new forms of anti social behaviour
- Mediation – this can help prevent parental or relative evictions
- PRS opportunities – where clients are placed in properties procured from PRS landlords who in turn are given a bond or rent guarantee to offset any losses they may incur through lack of rental income or damage to the property
- Clients who have experienced domestic violence are able to remain in their home through the council making adaptations to their property to make it safe and secure

Main reasons for homelessness of accepted households

Table 1 main recorded reason why households have been accepted as homeless

Homeless Reasons	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 est.
Family/relative evictions	204	125	85	114	124
Violence/harassment	79	67	34	49	41
Mortgage or rent arrears	13	6	5	12	8
Loss of rented accom'n AST ¹ & other	62	23	48	80	108
Loss of NASS ² accom'n	8	18	14	14	16

¹ Assured Shorthold Tenancy

² National Asylum Seeker Service

Leaving institution	16	7	3	7	3
Other reasons	59	39	25	23	21
Total	441	285	214	299	321

With better targeted mediation could more family/relative evictions be avoided? How can households be better sustained in the PRS AST tenancies? Both these questions are reflected in the PHS.

Priority needs categories / vulnerability of accepted households

Table 2 Households accepted as homeless need to fall within a recognised priority need category.

Priority need category of accepted	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 est.
Pregnant or with dependent children	130	51	86	145	164
Young person under 21	108	78	53	51	63
Vulnerable - old age	8	7	4	0	7
Vulnerable – physical disability	63	49	25	44	37
Vulnerable – mental health	79	52	24	30	33
Emergency	3	5	2	2	4
Other reasons	50	43	20	27	13
Total	441	285	214	299	321

Intervention appears to have cut the number of households without children in the various categories but households with dependent children are already above the pre-recession level of 2008/09. Finding temporary and permanent accommodation for larger households is a major issue.

Age Profile of accepted households

The table below shows the age range of households accepted by age of main applicant. In May 2009, the House of Lords ruled that local authorities should provide accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act to any lone, homeless children. This means that children in need of accommodation, whose parents are unable to provide suitable accommodation and who wish to be accommodated (under Section 20) must be considered “children looked after” by the local authority.

Table 3 Age profile of households accepted

Age	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 est.
Under 18	101	72	49	45	57
18-24	88	62	47	60	41
25-44	187	105	90	137	164
45-64	55	36	25	50	49
65-74	10	8	2	6	7
75+	0	2	1	1	3
Total	441	285	214	299	321

Young people are less likely to be accepted as homeless as the range of intervention / prevention options 'kick in'. The numbers in the 25-44 age group has increased 82% since 2010/11.

Table 4 Family or Household Type

Household Type	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 est.
Couple with dependent children	50	22	30	55	47
Lone parent - male	5	6	7	8	5
Lone parent - female	75	24	51	82	113
Single male	175	129	74	72	67
Single female	106	89	44	64	71
Other household type	30	15	8	18	18
Total	441	285	214	299	321

In terms of lone parents, women have always significantly outnumbered men. In terms of single people without dependents, men have historically outnumbered women. However, in the last couple of years, there has been something of a reversal of this latter trend and there are now roughly equal numbers of each. Housing Solutions staff don't really know why this is. The growth in lone parent families since 2009/10 accepted as homeless has been 370% and is well above the pre recession level.

Ethnicity / Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households

Table 5 acceptances by the main ethnic categories.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 est.
White	271	173	138	188	211
Black	79	53	49	63	56
Asian	11	10	5	13	19

Mixed & other	27	16	13	19	19
Ethnicity not stated	53	33	9	16	16
Total	441	285	214	299	321

The breakdown by ethnicity has not changed so significantly to trigger any concerns around access to services. The number of Asian households accepted is growing but is still small in overall terms. Ethnicity is being monitored in 95% of cases in 2012/13 compared to 88% in 2008/09.

Domestic violence

In 2012/13, there were 41 cases in which domestic violence was recorded as the reason for homelessness. Not all cases involve a direct partner. This represented 12.8% of all acceptances and was a slight decrease on the previous year. See page 38 of main body PHS - 'types of prevention and intervention'.

Housing Register, Supply and lettings

The table (below) details the amount of new affordable housing supply in Bristol over the last five years. The amount being built is reducing year on year, with a 49% fall from 2008/09. The Mayor has instigated work to get the number of affordable homes built up to 1,000 for the year 2016/17.

Table 6 Affordable Housing Letting and New Supply

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 est.
Lettings	2,468	2,914	2,807	2,795	2,560
New supply	561	553	402	369	300

The amount of supply is reducing (new supply over the last five years, lettings over the last four years) and at the same time the Housing Register has grown.

Table 7 Housing Register

At 31 st March	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
New applicants		8,562	10,426	10,212	9,928
Transfers		4,180	4,575	4,373	4,432
Housing Register Total	9,683	12,742	15,001	14,585	14,360

Housing Allocations

In 2011/12 71% of new lets to council housing went to homeless households compared to 67% the previous year.

ANNEXE C – Projects that build together to make this PHS, key client groups and glossary of terms

Projects

Homelessness Advice & Prevention Review (HAPR) – A major review is underway to improve the experience of people receiving housing advice and prevention services; and make those services more consistently efficient and effective. HAPR will improve information so services are more evidence based and make maximum use of appropriate ICT. HAPR includes renewed impetus for the Early Bird headline action from the HS with the possibility of a new diagnostic tool which both agencies and potentially homeless households can use.

Housing Support Register

The majority of short-term, supported housing is accessed via this register; it ensures one application accesses all the available suppliers. It allows the range of supply to be better monitored.

Commissioning Reviews:

These review those support services for homeless and other vulnerable households (mainly formerly SP funded). The aim is to commission services that are more targeted, flexible, psychologically informed and co-ordinated, including services that meet complex needs.

High support, short-term accommodation based services

High support services (includes high support hostels) were reviewed and all new services will be in place by September 2013. An emphasis on complex needs recognises the high incidence of multiple issues and ill-health amongst existing high support hostel service users (ref: Homeless Link's Health Needs Audit). Review also informed by data from the city's JSNA³ and Mental Health Needs Assessment, which specifically looked at high risk communities.

Lower and Floating, short-term support

Draft Needs Analysis (informing commissioning of) Lower Level Support Accommodation, Floating Support and integrated young parents provision has been undertaken. There will be 604 units, including young people specific, women only and generic. For family accommodation, terms are to be renegotiated with all current providers (including BCC). At spring 2013 all specialist, temporary family accommodation is full hence the use of more emergency options has been the norm.

A concern expressed in the expectations survey was the sudden withdrawal of support when clients leave supported accommodation; the commissioning agreements give providers a six week resettlement window to provide transitional support if needed while new support arrangements kick in. Providers have also been asked to improve and ensure confidentiality of equalities monitoring

³ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – a report which measures the health of Bristol

Review of Medium Support Services

Will look at any services not covered by the first two reviews.

'Wraparound' services

The commissioning plan focuses on non accommodation based support: including funding the Compass Centre for outreach with rough sleepers, programmes to get homeless people into or more ready for work, mediation, community mentoring, preventing homelessness after domestic abuse, furniture packs, part funding the Wellbeing Service. The services commissioned dovetail with other council and partners' services.

Mental health short-term, medium support

This commissioning review is ongoing in 2013/14.

Commissioning plan for specialist accommodation & support services for young people with higher support needs

Mostly services for young people aged 16-17 but also some older teenagers to whom the council owes a duty of care. Young people whose vulnerability and high level of need makes mainstream homelessness prevention services unsuitable for them. This corporate plan details the up-to-date types of accommodation and services required plus process improvements such as more consistent data collection and better partnership working.

Safer Bristol Commissioning of Drug and Alcohol services *

New contracts November 2013.

HSC Mental Health, Learning Difficulties and Autism Accommodation Strategy *

Consultation May 2013.

Mental Health, Learning Difficulties & HIV Floating Support Review *

The three reviews marked * are led by BCC teams outside of the Neighbourhoods department. They are relevant to preventing homelessness and homeless clients so fuller details will be added to this Annex.

Move-on policy

See page 20 of main body PHS.

Hidden Homelessness research

The City Council was awarded £120k by DCLG to try and identify the extent of the problem in Bristol focussing on a pilot area in the Barton Hill/ Lawrence Hill area. An

action plan has been put in place to tackle the identified causes – this includes £30,000 to employ a ‘community bridge builder’ to provide an education campaign (to tackle poor housing conditions and securing low cost good condition private housing), local housing advice from trusted community organisations and establish referral links to mainstream services.

Some Key client groups

Young people

The council and partners will work to challenge perceptions around homelessness especially for young people. Linked to this is the ability to tackle the main causes of homelessness and promote other options that help prevent it. The main reason for the most recorded incidences of homelessness among young people was relative / parental evictions. Mediation, persuading parents to keep dependents at home – various funds won by 1624 IP.

Refugee households (relationship to asylum seeking)

XX

See pages 28 and 30 of Annexe E

Ex offenders and those in prison (probation and YOT)

It is important to help this group as it has tangible benefits not just for the individual, but will help to contribute a safer and better city; and as already mentioned can help fulfil other strategic aims outside of preventing homelessness. Access to stable and appropriate accommodation is a significant contributory factor in helping offenders to desist from further offending, can also help to improve health, well-being, gives people a platform to find work etc. The wider social and economic benefits from reducing offending are significant (see Breaking the Cycle Evidence Report, MOJ 2012, which states that in 2003 the financial costs of crime in England and Wales was £36.2 billion). 1625 Independent People are running a Big Lottery Fund scheme called Future 4 Me that offers specialist support to young people leaving custody and leaving care.

Gypsies, Travellers and other travelling communities⁴

In the same way that housing the generally more settled community is hampered by the shortage of affordable housing being built and becoming available, the shortage of pitches for caravans affects travelling communities. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) of 2007 recommended 24 additional pitches for Bristol by 2011 but as yet these have not been delivered. A new updated GTAA is to be completed by the end of 2013 but it seems unlikely demand will have diminished.

Travelling communities are particularly prone to ‘hidden homelessness’ and overcrowding as they will make every effort to fit relatives on their pitch. Whilst a

⁴ E.g. travelling show people, Roma

household may have a caravan (so appear not to be homeless, roofless in the usual sense) often there is nowhere they can park their caravan.

As well as those communities that have traditionally lived in caravans other groups such as ‘new age’ travellers or migrant workers live in converted vehicles and caravans and this can lead to issues and sometime homelessness.

Since 2007 an Eastern European Roma community has become established in Bristol including some who are asylum seekers from Romania. Most have not had recourse to public funds to date and some have large families (see Annexe E page 30 on the implications this might have for homelessness services). A number of these families are on the ‘poverty line’ and as this PHS illustrates elsewhere poverty/debt is often a precursor to homelessness.

Some households from traditional travelling communities have moved into ‘bricks and mortar’ homes but perhaps because this is done from lack of choice or because of harassment they often swap one set of poor health problems for another set (e.g. mental health problems).

Bristol has a problem with overcrowded households because of the shortage of suitable affordable housing and travelling communities feature within that. BCC’s small Gypsy and Traveller team are working to ensure the issues affecting these communities don’t get missed and work is underway in conjunction with other BCC teams to identify sites for pitches.

People losing their PRS accommodation

Loss of private tenancy as an increasing cause of homelessness is a very concerning trend.

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Total Homelessness Decisions	341	265	349	391
Duty Accepted	285	214	299	324
Of which reason was loss of private rent tenancy	8	30	65	98

Source: P1E returns

Rough sleepers

See main body document page 18 and Annexe B graph 8

People with multiple and complex needs (link: BIG Lottery bid ‘Fulfilling Lives’)

See main body page 17.

Families with children (especially large families)

See Annexe E page 28.

Glossary

Preventing Homelessness Board (PHB) – has representation from the Council (Strategic Housing, Children & Young People’s Services and Health & Social Care⁵), the voluntary sector, service users, providers, Probation and Public Health (User Feedback Organisation). It is the 'hands on' body for ensuring this strategy is delivered. The PHB is a sub group of Homes4Bristol the strategic housing partnership which produces and delivers the city's Housing Strategy.

Rest of Glossary to be done at the end

⁵ All the major service delivery departments of the council are on the PHB and arrangements will be made to ensure the remaining central department support the PHS, see page 10 main body PHS

ANNEXE D – ‘Making Every Contact Count’ Government’s Ten Local Challenges

Ten local challenges	Bristol does	
<p>LC1.To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services</p>	<p>This PHS (will be) has been signed off by the Strategic Leadership Team of BCC; also by the corporate H&W Board and PHB (these last two with multi agency representation inc. providers)</p> <p>There are numerous examples of this corporate approach in the strategy, e.g. Bristol Youth Links is the name for youth provision in the city, the contracts for these services include education around homelessness in schools, early warning of potential housing issues as well as related issues such as illegal drug use.</p>	
<p>LC2.To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training (EET) needs</p>	<p>The relevant partners are represented on the PHB. There are a number of initiatives to get those affected by homelessness back into meaningful activity. An action in this strategy is likely to be to audit the extent of this work and ensure the widest range of clients get these options. EET is reflected in the outcomes the city’s homelessness services seek to bring about.</p>	
<p>LC3. To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice</p>	<p>Achieved thru’ the BCC Housing Solutions services and other services provided by partners (some commissioned) The Homelessness Advice & Prevention Review (HAPR) is overhauling the BCC services and will be cost effective, and maximise joint working and ICT technology. This will include how advice is given to non priority clients by the council and partners (the Early Bird project). External to BCC commissioned services are being commissioned and monitored by a team in the SH Division.</p>	
<p>LC4.To adopt a ‘No Second Night Out’ (NSNO) model or an effective local alternative</p>	<p>Bristol has a NSNO compliant project delivered by St Mungo’s in partnership with hostels. Other services include a psychotherapist and alcohol outreach worker. Bristol also adopts a severe weather emergency protocol during cold weather to ensure no-one needs to be ‘on the streets’.</p>	

Ten local challenges	Bristol does	
<p>LC5.To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support</p>	<p>The council wants to ensure: the services it commissions offer consistently effective support and that service users do not find themselves becoming homeless again by improving the quality of the support provided, helping more people with appropriate support to move on to independent living.</p> <p>Clients with multiple and complex needs have always been a problem in that many services are not flexible or resource intensive enough to work with this group. Also a 'Fulfilling Lives' BIG Lottery bid led by Second Step (a supported housing provider in Bristol) could secure up to £10m over eight years to put in place an approach to helping service users with the most complex needs. The commissioning of homelessness support services has included and emphasis on the right services for those with multiple needs.</p>	
<p>LC6.To develop a suitable private rented sector (PRS) offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord</p>	<p>Bristol already makes good use of PRS solutions with a dedicated team helping homeless and threatened with homelessness clients into this sector.</p> <p>This team are looking to expand the number helped. In addition BCC is looking to attract Private Leasing schemes to the city. Almost half the empty properties brought back into use in the city are used to house 'homeless' clients. Another action to be pursued is to try to negotiate longer PRS tenancies in order to make this a more secure sector. Bristol also has a dynamic working group with private landlords, agents and tenants which advises how to best work with the PRS.</p> <p>Discretionary licensing is seeking to regulate those landlords in the PRS who provide the worst accommodation. The Stapleton Rd area which has a very high % of PRS properties is the first area in which this approach is being adopted.</p>	
<p>LC7.To actively engage in preventing mortgage</p>	<p>Due to early intervention Bristol has been successful in minimising the number of</p>	

Ten local challenges	Bristol does	
repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme	households becoming homeless from this route. It will be regularly monitored.	
LC8.To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs	The PHS will be reviewed annually and its Action Plan reviewed more frequently. The council and partners' early intervention, preventative approach is set out therein.	
LC9.To not place any young person (YP) aged 16/17 in Bed & Breakfast accommodation	This has generally been achieved with only three exceptions in 2012/13 and is an explicit aim of Bristol's Housing Solutions Teams. It worth putting this in context as B&B had to be used 89 times in one year for YPs as recently as 2010/11.	
LC10. To not place any families in Bed & Breakfast accomm. unless in an emergency and for no longer than six weeks	<p>Traditional B&B is very rarely used for families by Bristol and certainly only in emergency situations. The temporary accommodation BCC uses has self-contained facilities unlike the traditional, less suitable model of B&B.</p> <p>But the numbers of households needing emergency and temporary accommodation is starting to creep up and Bristol continues to look at solutions which are suitable.</p> <p>This target has been referred to by Housing Minister Mark Prisk as the Gold Standard. On this basis Bristol is achieving the 'Platinum Standard' in this area.</p>	

ANNEXE E – Forecasting Demand

There are many factors that will have effects upon future demand for homelessness services. *Outlined in the main body Preventing Homelessness Strategy.*

The key findings from year 1 of the *Homelessness Monitor* published by the University of York, show the following:

- Welfare reform - in combination with the economic downturn – seems certain to drive homelessness up over the next few years, as it will undermine the safety net that usually provides a “buffer” between a loss of income, and homelessness, and will restrict access to the PRS for low income households.
- National and local statistical analysis indicates that some aspects of “visible” homelessness – including rough sleeping and statutory homelessness – have commenced a very recent upward trajectory.
- With respect to hidden homelessness – concealed, sharing and overcrowded households – there are longer-term rising trends, starting before the current recession, and reflecting mainly housing affordability and demographic pressures.
- Looking forward, the next two years may be a crucial time period over which “lagged” impacts of the recession start to materialise, together with at least some of the effects of welfare and housing reform.

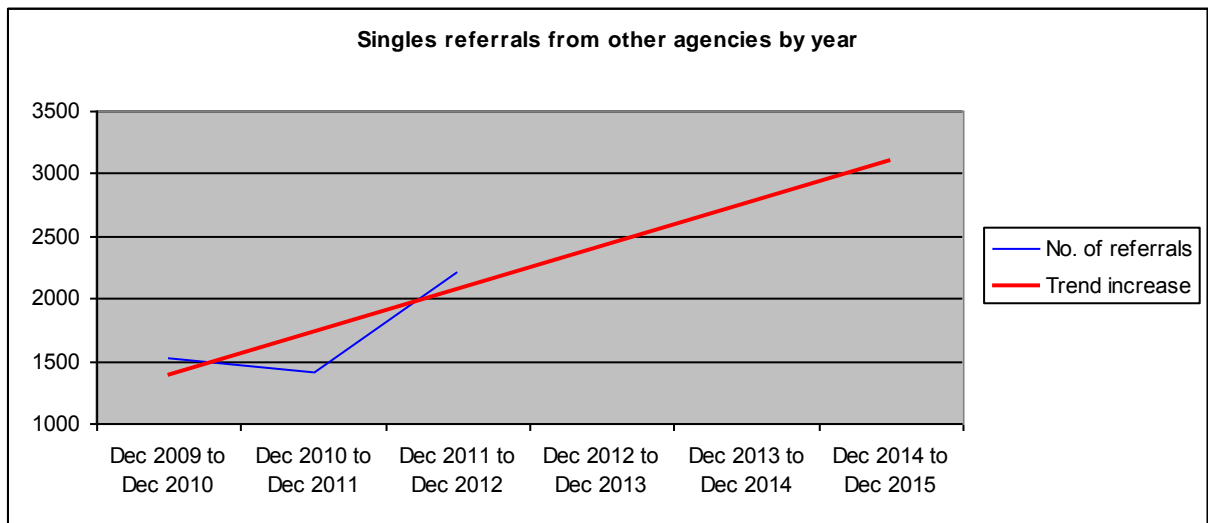
BCC’s Housing Advice Team has already seen a marked increase in demand for its services. Referrals have risen by about 30% over the last three years. It is anticipated that this upward trend will continue and more markedly for the reasons given above. The projection in the graph below shows that the anticipated number of referrals will reach nearly 7,000 per year (28 per working day) by December 2015.

Included within these referrals are the advance notices of mortgage repossession and BCC evictions. These have risen by 23% and 69% respectively over the same time period and involve intensive intervention casework to be carried out by staff to prevent homelessness.

These figures can be broken down further to show the source of referrals. It is notable that referrals from Customer Service Points (CSPs) have reduced from over 1,000 to fewer than 800 per year, a decrease of 24%. This was anticipated because CSPs have been advised not to complete referral forms where a client already has a support worker or is engaged with other professionals e.g. a social worker, probation officer etc. If this trend is projected forward to 2015 it is expected that this will result in less than 650 referrals per year from CSPs. *The on-going Homelessness Advice and Prevention Review (HAPR) are likely to have a major effect on this as well.*

Correspondingly the number of referrals from other agencies has increased by nearly 50% and by 2015 will account for over 3,000 per year.

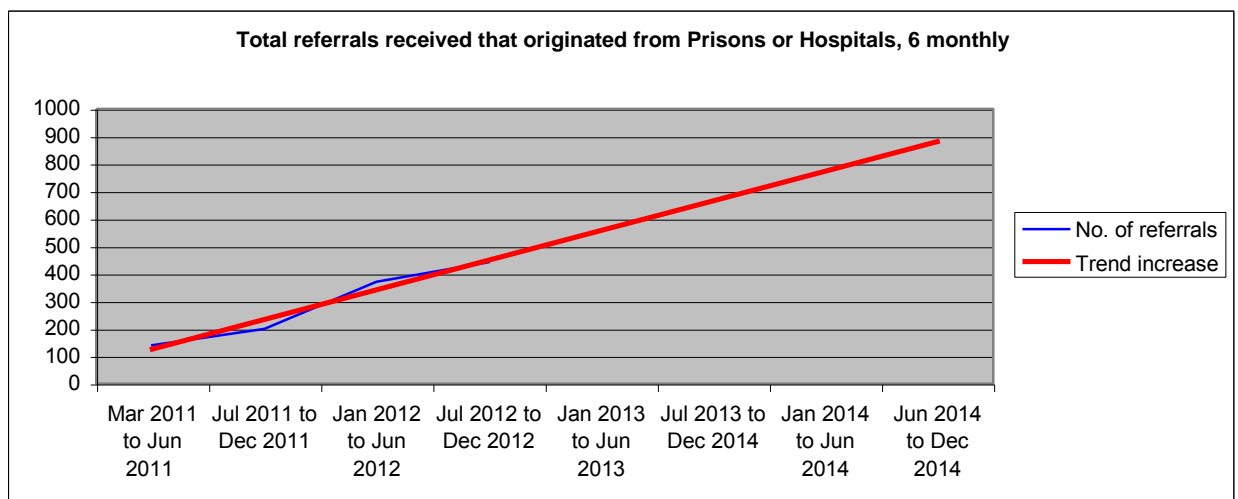
Graph 9



Complex needs

Analysis of the numbers of referrals received only shows one part of the picture. Apart from an overall increase, the type of case being referred has changed. More clients with complex needs are presenting as homeless. This is not easy to demonstrate statistically as “complex needs” is not used as a category for monitoring purposes. However the increase in referrals from Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP), Health & Social Care (HSC), hospitals and prisons can be shown (this information has only been recorded over the last 22 months). As a result of this increase BCC has now allocated an extra housing advisor to assist with hospital discharge, from within existing resources.

Graph 10 Complex Referrals



The projected figure shows that by December 2014 referrals from this source will be approaching 1,800 per year (7 per working day)

As well as the difficulties and obstacles involved in dealing with these challenging cases, it is also becoming increasingly difficult to find appropriate accommodation for

this client group. The following figures show numbers of cases referred via the Housing Support Register (HSR) but refused by providers; and also by BCC's family hostels because support needs were deemed to be too high.

Although the Private Renting Team (PRT) has slightly exceeded its annual targets, since its inception in January 2010, there are predictable challenges to the team:

1. Demand already exceeds supply and this gap is likely to increase
2. The effects of welfare reform and capping will make it more challenging to secure PRS⁶ accommodation for the client group, bearing in mind the existing demands from the general population
3. It is likely that the team will see more referrals of people with challenging and complex needs: the very client group that is not popular with PRS landlords and least likely to sustain tenancies.

Since April 2012, providers have refused 2,724 nominations on the HSR. Most single clients will be nominated to a number of providers and the majority of these refusals will be for clients needing high support accommodation who have been refused by all or the majority of high support accommodation providers. For example, some clients may be refused on six occasions by the main high support male hostels.

Some clients are also refused by the three family hostels. On average 10% of referrals are refused (e.g. since April 2012 69 nominations have been made to one family hostel but seven (almost 10%) have been refused because of the complexity of the clients' issues.

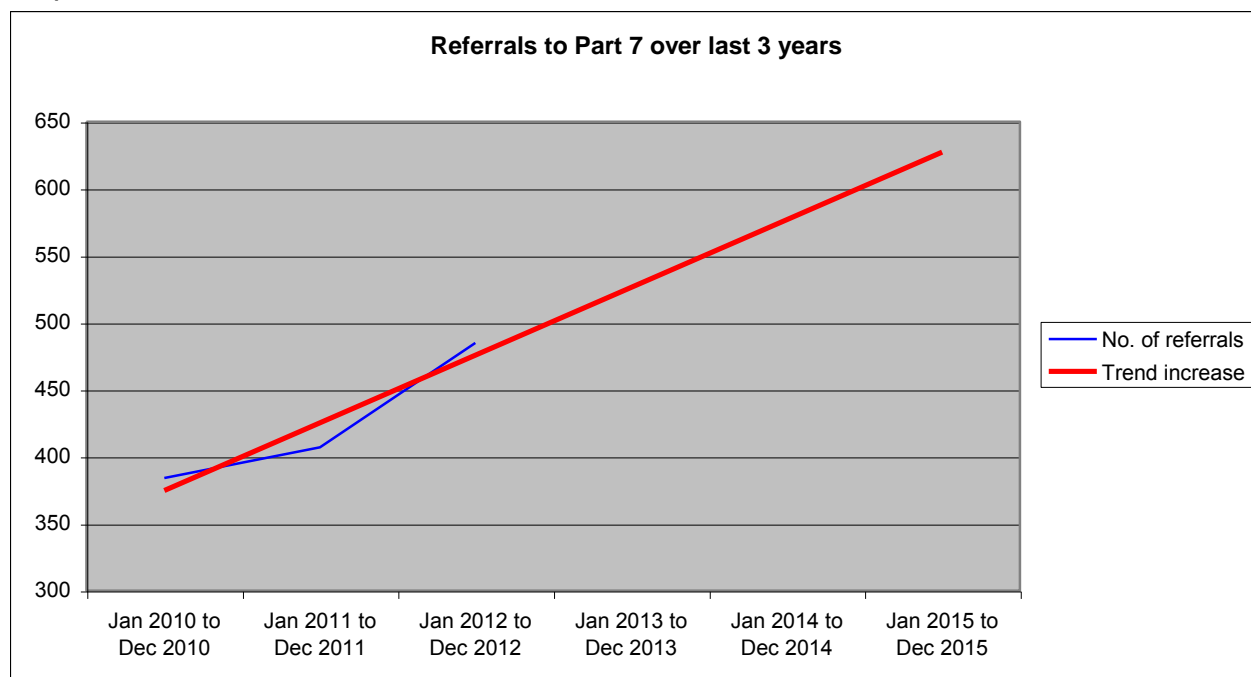
Increase in statutorily accepted cases

Bristol's aim is to prevent homelessness and hence reduce the number of statutory homeless (part VII) referrals because it is proven to be cheaper and also because it correspondingly reduces the numbers in temporary accommodation and therefore complies with government targets.

The graph below shows that referrals are now increasing from around 370 in 2010 to just under 480 in 2012 (30% rise). The projection shows that by 2015 this will have risen to about 630 per year. This may be a conservative estimate as by then the possibly "lagged" effects of welfare reform may well start to show as the continuing effects of the recession, rises in unemployment and higher rents in the PRS.

⁶ Private Rented Sector

Graph 12



Some of the reasons for the current increase can be put down to the following:

- 1) The downturn in the housing market has resulted in more potential first time buyers now renting privately; meaning that landlords can be more selective in choosing tenants and also charging higher rents. This has had a knock-on effect on the availability of properties offered to the PRT. The following table shows private rent levels for Bristol and surrounding LAs. Average rents for all property sizes are well above LHA rates and in the case of 4 bed properties 41% over the HB LHA cap of £950 effectively rendering these properties unaffordable to clients.
- 2) More clients are being refused by providers on the HSR because they are deemed to be high risk.
- 3) More advocates (referral agencies) are insisting on the full Part VII assessment and section 184 notices (inquiries into homelessness eligibility).

Effects of Welfare Reform (including on large families)

There are an estimated 376 households in Bristol affected by the total benefits cap. Their tenure is as follows: council tenants (CoT) – 144; registered provider (RP) tenants – 81; PRS tenants – 151.

Of the 151 PRS households some will be in a position to resolve their issues either by maximising income or starting work. However 40 of these households will lose over £100 per week. Larger households affected by the cap are overwhelmingly HomeChoice Bristol applicants and are keen to move in to social housing. There is not enough suitably sized housing for these families and given the difference between contractual rent and actual income it is inevitable that homelessness presentations will be made. Given current trends it is reasonable to assume that 50 of these households will be made homeless over the next two years (25 p.a.).

In addition the number of households forced to leave ¹ NASS accommodation has risen from nine to 18 in the last year (not all of these are larger families) then an assumption can be made that between five and 10 larger families will present and need accommodation in the forthcoming year. If BCC is unable to access PRS properties, then placements into B&B may be the only option available.

Apart from the above there are approximately 4,500 social housing tenants that will be affected by the spare room subsidy AKA 'bedroom tax' (3,500 CoT and 1,000 RP). HB reduction will either be 14% or 25% depending upon the level of under-occupation. Based on these figures, and if tenants do nothing to resolve the shortfall, then rent arrears will accrue. Because of the relatively small amounts involved (£12 per week at 14% and £21 at 25%) arrears will rise slowly. Therefore it can be assumed that if evictions are to take place then there will be a long lead in time, possibly mid 2014 until this happens.

Assistance for those affected will be afforded by the HomeChoice allocations policy which awards band 4 for one bed under-occupancy and band 1 for two bedrooms and above. This however will have a negative effect on homeless clients on band 3 who will wait correspondingly longer for an allocation. If 5% of the total number does not make alternative arrangements e.g. take in lodgers or seek a transfer, then this could result in 225 evictions probably in 2014/15.

In late 2013 Universal Credit (UC) will be introduced. The current proposal is that this will be paid monthly in arrears to one member of the household. It is very likely that this will lead to more households falling into debt and rent arrears, as many households will not have experience of budgeting and prioritising their expenditure. If a household is also capped then there will be little left to cover the cost of rent. It seems inevitable that this will lead to a rise in homelessness. The Housing Benefit Policy Team has estimated that between 500 and 1,000 claimants will transfer to UC between October 2013 and March 2014 and between 5,000 and 10,000 in 2014/15.

We already know that exceptions to the UC limit are planned for people living in supported exempt accommodation but that some of the current temporary accommodation Bristol uses, e.g. owned by the council will not be exempt which means the affordability of placements at Trinity Lodge and Windermere will have to be extremely clear. This further challenges BCC's ability to secure sustainable housing for larger families.

The likely impact on services, as mentioned previously, will be lagged but if 5% are unable to come to terms with the new regime this could lead to between 250 and 500 presentations. DWP are monitoring this aspect of payments in a UC pilot scheme and this shows a 20% failure rate which, if applied to the above, would increase these figures fourfold to between 1,000 and 2,000 presentations.

Role of Community Justice Intervention Team (CJIT) workers

The role of these workers illustrates the increased complexity of the issues clients face. Their original remit was to see prolific offenders with a history of drug and/or alcohol addiction. This has now extended to working with the Integrated Response

Integrated Service (IRIS) team who work with high-risk offenders and probation clients with a range of issues beyond the original criteria. These include Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), care leavers and people with mental health and/or personality disorder.

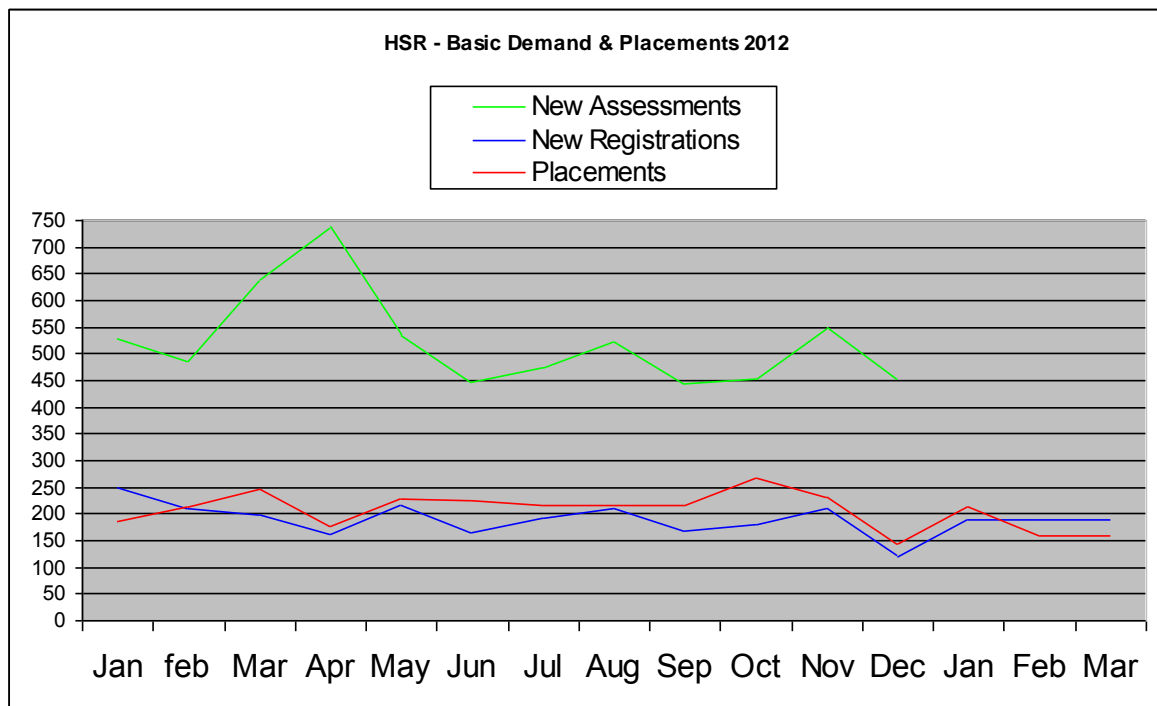
Hospital Ward closures

Two acute wards at Southmead Hospital have closed with the loss of 24 beds. The Lodge Causeway rehabilitation unit, with approximately 20 beds, has also closed. Clients with much higher needs - who previously would have been funded through the Section 117 panel - are now accessing homelessness services via the HSR.

Housing Support Register

A basic analysis of demand and placements on the HSR shows that assessments of all clients (new and existing) have averaged 484 per month over the last year, whilst new registrations (new HSR clients) have averaged 180 per month. These compare to an average of 202 placements (all services) per month. In very basic terms this shows that service availability is currently meeting ongoing demand.

Graph 13



The High Support Review has reduced high support bed spaces by approx 20%. It is proposed that increased efficiencies and performance (e.g. turnaround) will compensate for the reduction in bed spaces. Early indications are that these efficiencies are not yet being realised and may take some time to deliver i.e. for hostel management teams to adjust their services to meet the new expectations. Anecdotal evidence shows refusal rates on risk exceeding 5% and turnover is not yet increasing.

Failure to meet the efficiencies will show an increasing gap between supply and demand as turnover (supply) falls and demand very likely increases (see graph above)

Demographic changes – main points

- 10% increase in Bristol population since 2001. National average 7%.
- Third highest growth rate of all core cities.
- 0 to four year olds increased by 26.5% since 2001, twice the national average
- 14% of the population born outside UK 2011, 8.2% in 2001 (this has been a factor in the increased number of larger families).
- The PRS in Bristol has increased from 12.2% to 22.1% of all accommodation.

These factors will impact in terms of the ability to respond e.g. language barriers; increasing need for interpreters; eligibility; larger families; higher turnover in and high demand for PRS housing. This last point may explain the increase in reports of alleged illegal eviction and harassment to the Tenancy Relations Team. Reported illegal eviction has increased from 40 cases in 2010 to 60 in 2012 and harassment from six to 28 in the same period (figures from the first three quarters of 2012).

The expansion in the PRS tenure also accounts for an increase in homelessness as a result of the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy. See Table 1, page 11 of Annexe B.

Persons from abroad

At the end of this year transitional arrangements will end for Bulgaria and Romania nationals. Citizens from both countries will have free movement across the EU in 2014 and gain the unrestricted right to live and work in the UK where currently they require authorisation before taking a job. Estimates vary greatly as to how many households from the two countries might come to the UK. Croatia also gained accession to the EU in July 2013.

It is too early to predict the exact effect of this in Bristol but it is likely that some households may present as homeless and some may be larger families of which Bristol will already have 25 larger families “in the system” to house, see page 27. Assuming there will be seven larger family NASS cases and even 10 larger ‘accession’ households in any one year⁷ this amounts to 42 larger families needing accommodation. If PRS accommodation has to be found then the cost would be in the region of £2,000 per calendar month. Generally where families have five or more children there will be no housing cost element payable in UC which means that a significant amount of these costs will not be recoverable through ‘non housing related’ benefit where families are in receipt of UC.

A concern for the teams finding emergency accommodation is that there is sufficient funding and flexibility if there is an upsurge in larger families needing emergency housing, a needs group that is already straining the council and partners’ capacity.

⁷ This is a conservative estimate and it might be as well to prepare in anticipation of a higher number.

From current DWP information on welfare reform there are advantages in housing larger families through an exempt accommodation (EA) landlord e.g. a Registered Provider. This is because EA housing costs will be assessed and paid locally by the LA and the housing costs will not be capped. Any cap that is applicable in EA cases will be applied by the DWP in the UC payment.

ANNEXE F – Checklist from previous PHS

There were a number of strategic outputs as part of the previous Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2008 to 2013. The following table provides a brief summary of progress against these.

Strategic Outputs	
What was said	What was done
I. Create a Future Commissioning Model	The process of commissioning has become much more established. This will allow a more strategic approach to a sector which grew in an ad hoc way. There must always be some flexibility to allow for output VI below.
II. Implement New Case Management systems	This was not implemented. The HAPR ⁸ has replaced this as a way of improving the customer journey around homelessness and housing advice.
III. Create Sustainable Housing Routes	A lot of work has been done around pathways for homeless households to achieve independence and also care pathways led by HSC. Pathways are built into the services that have been commissioned.
IV. Increasing Access to Information and Support	Response in two parts; access to info is the Early Bird part of the HAPR whilst access to support is within the commissioned reviews.
V. Focus on Equalities	Monitoring has improved and there is a lot of emphasis on groups which are not getting the access they need. Commitment to improved monitoring in the EqIA.
VI. Focus on Other Emerging Priorities	The important reason for this is that if the council and partners don't aim to have advance warning of homelessness trends then solutions will be more reactive. The main body PHS and Annexe E 'Forecasting Demand' both show how the aim of the PHS is to make preventing homelessness more proactive.

⁸ Review of BCC, in-house homelessness, advice and prevention services

ANNEXE G – Welfare Reform and Legal Aid Changes (background and more detail)

For more comprehensive information on Welfare Reform we have provided links to two reports, 'the local impacts of welfare reform' by the Local Government Association and the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion.

http://www.local.gov.uk/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/4098780/PUBLICATION

and a BCC report ([link to Sam Flowers 'exit' report](#))

Changes to Housing Benefit – Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Caps

In April 2011 LHA caps were introduced for private sector rents, based on the number of bedrooms required, with an upper limit based on a four bedroom home. In addition all LHA levels have been amended to reflect the bottom 30% of private market rents in an area thereby further reducing LHA levels and the availability of homes to those in housing need.

The impact of the LHA caps leaves low income households, particularly families in need of larger homes, with the choices of either making up the difference in rent or moving to more affordable accommodation. However, it is likely that for many households this restricts the areas of the city they can afford and they may have to live away from family, employment and social networks in order to secure affordable housing in the private sector.

In April 2011 it was estimated almost 7,000 households living in the PRS in Bristol would be negatively affected by these changes. (to be updated)

With the LHA caps to be linked to the Consumer Price Index from April 2013 it is expected that more families reliant on welfare benefits will find it increasingly difficult to meet their rent and other costs of living.

Non Dependent Deductions

From April 2011 there has been three years of increases in deductions made from Housing Benefit (HB) payable to private and social housing tenants for non dependent adults in a household. This is to reverse the freeze previously in place for such deductions from 2001 to 2011 and has resulted in 75% increase in these charges between 2011 and 2014. Over 2,000 Bristol households are affected in the first year of this change.

Shared Accommodation Rate

From January 2012 the age at which single people can claim HB for their own 'self-contained' home increased from 25 to 35. This means that single people under 35, who are in receipt of benefits or on low incomes, are now only be able to claim the

shared room rate. For Bristol a city which relies significantly upon the use of the PRS to help with the prevention of homeless, this is having an impact on the supply of and costs of temporary accommodation (TA) at a time when homeless approaches and acceptances are already on the increase. There are a couple of exceptions which agencies dealing with homelessness are aware of, for over 25's who have spent more than three months in a hostel and for certain ex-offenders, plus existing exceptions for certain disabled persons

Welfare Reform Act 2012

The Welfare Reform Act will have significant consequences for families living in both private rented and social housing. These reforms target those who are long term unemployed as well as seeking to reduce benefits paid to households in more expensive PRS homes. More detail can be found on the Department for Work and Pensions website at: www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/

From August 2013 the introduction of a total benefits cap of £500 per week for families and £350 a week for single person households will have a significant impact on working age claimants. From October 2013 the phasing in of Universal Credit will commence with some new working age claimants moving onto this new single benefit system.

The total benefits caps will hit larger families hardest, some of whom will be unable to afford anything other than social housing, of which there is a major shortage. The choice for affected families will be to either live in overcrowded and unsuitable accommodation or to move to cheaper areas (if these can be found) and potentially away from schools and family and/or other support networks.

From April 2013 under-occupying social housing tenants of working age will only receive HB for the property size they absolutely need rather than the property they occupy. The level of reduction in HB is 14% for a one bedroom more than required surplus and 25% for a two bedrooms more.

The introduction of monthly payments paid direct to tenants is likely to lead to an increase in arrears. Also has potential impact on landlords, particularly private landlords who might become more reluctant to take on low income/vulnerable tenants, especially larger families. This is likely to lead to more homelessness, but one mitigating factor is that homelessness is among seven criteria where claimants would be likely to receive additional services to help with making their claim.

Other changes

Council Tax Benefit has been abolished and replaced by a local scheme (Bristol's decision for this Benefit to remain unchanged in 2013/14 will assist vulnerable deprived households from having to contribute to this and prevent further and unnecessary debt). Disability Living Allowance ends for those aged 16 to 65 and replaced with Personal Independence Payments.

Some crisis loans and all community care grants have been abolished and the budget passed to local authorities in the form of a new local Crisis & Prevention Fund. This will target emergency payments (as pre-payment cards) and household goods to people in the greatest need or who have the greatest difficulty managing their money

Legal Aid Changes

Changes have now come into effect with Legal Aid funding for advice completely abolished in welfare benefits and immigration, cut by 75% for debt, and by around 35% for housing work. This has meant a significant reduction in funding for the charities (advice agencies) in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire – in total approximately £730k of funding has been lost. These cuts will result in approximately 4,000 people not being able to access the specialist help and advice they would have been able to under the previous funding schemes. Agencies have been working closely together to try and minimise the impact of these cuts (thanks to vital funding from the sub region's local authorities and a wide range of other trusts and funders), but, combined with the additional demand caused by welfare reform, advice agencies are facing more pressure on their services than ever before.

A Bristol consortium bid led by Avon & Bristol Law Centre for the government's Advice Services Transition Fund was successful to the tune of £323k. This money will help in the short-term to offset the loss in Legal Aid funding. A quarter of the money awarded can be used for frontline service delivery, so in Bristol this will pay for a specialist welfare rights service to operate for the next two years. The rest of the fund is going to be used for a variety of behind the scenes activities that will strengthen advice agencies to help them survive this difficult period, such as updating case management systems to free up advisor time, developing volunteering and training, improving fundraising from corporate and individual donors, supporting smaller agencies to gain the accredited Advice Quality Standard, and developing more 'pro-bono' services from professionals and firms across the region, among many other activities.

Need to mention here the work of advice services in Bristol and particularly the work they do to contribute to homelessness prevention. BCC supports this work through funding which is overseen by a Joint Strategic Board for Welfare Reform and Advice Provision. As its name implies the Board is also responsible for taking a strategic overview and joining up the work of the agencies involved. Other funding has changed too, and at the time of writing (September 2013) the overall supply of advice is holding up for now, not that it has ever been sufficient to meet all demand, let alone need. Advice services have sought to maximise 'reach' from limited funding e.g. website info and have produced factsheets that local advice centres use, WRAMAS take-up publicity, Bristol Citizens Advice Bureau advice point triage etc. WRAMAS also provides effective specialist support to commissioned (known as Supporting People funded) services

Social landlords in Bristol have been successful in two Big Lottery bids for financial inclusion work with tenants. The schemes are called 'Pennywise' - free advice for social housing tenants (over 25 years of age) on managing their finances; and

'Cashpoint' free advice for social housing tenants (under 25 years of age) on managing their finances

Summary of National reports on Welfare Reform

Indicate the likely consequences of the changes include:

- Reduced household income and increasing risk of debt
- Increased need for money and debt advice, if individuals whose benefits are reduced do not enter employment.
- Lack of preparation for the changes by some individuals who may not understand what is happening and how they will be affected resulting in crisis situations developing (homelessness, bankruptcy)
- The potential increase in poverty could result in increased family breakdown and greater need for social services intervention
- Large families, disabled individuals and lone parents are likely to be affected most by the changes

Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS) 2013-18
Impact Assessment

Draft Equality

Directorate: and Services: Neighbourhoods; strategic direction for a range of homelessness and related services provided either directly by Bristol City Council (BCC) or commissioned by BCC from external partners. Also influences related activity such as housing/homelessness advice.

Lead officer (author of the proposal): Kevin Mulvenna, Senior Policy & Projects Officer.

Additional people completing the form (including job title): None

Start date for EqIA: May 2013

Estimated completion date: Autumn 2013

These dates relate the initial preparation/writing of the EqIA, its' influence will be for the whole period of the PHS (until 2018) as with the PHS and its' Action Plan it will be 'live', flexible and reviewed regularly.

Step 1 – Use the following checklist to consider whether the proposal requires an EqlA

1. What is the purpose of the proposal?

Please summarise what is planned.

The project is the Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS). A homelessness strategy is a statutory duty of the council.

The PHS will:

- provide vision and ‘overpinning’ policy direction for a range of homelessness and related services provided either directly by Bristol City Council (BCC) or commissioned by BCC from external partners
- influence services not under its auspices but which contribute to preventing homelessness e.g. advice, education
- include revised aims, priorities and outcomes for homelessness and related services
- have a SMART Action Plan with responsible leads. This will be produced after the BCC budget setting in February 2014. It will include full detail of resources to be utilised.
- establish the high level vision and establishes priorities; it allows sufficient flexibility to deliver against these within resource constraints.
- secure the accommodation that is necessary for people who are or may become homeless
- demonstrate how Bristol meets and exceeds the ten local challenges from central government’s ‘Making Each Contact Count’ Strategy
- be a ‘live’, flexible strategy and be regularly reviewed to ensure it is still relevant. It is intended to be a ‘living’ document used by relevant people to enhance performance around preventing homelessness
- articulate the overlapping of homelessness with other issues e.g. poor physical and mental health; drug and alcohol misuse, offending, domestic abuse etc.; and make solutions joined-up in the light of this

Because of the strong correlation with health issues the PHS has been considered (05/09/13) and is supported by the statutory Health and Wellbeing Board.

Governance:

- regular monitoring of the delivery of the PHS’s Action Plan will be undertaken by the Preventing Homelessness Board (a sub group of Homes4Bristol¹);
- the Health and Wellbeing Board support the PHS (in recognition of the adverse effects on health of homelessness); and
- final sign-off will be by Mayor/Cabinet

The Preventing Homelessness Board (PHB) has oversight of the Strategy. PHB is a multi-agency board, comprising senior officers from BCC Strategic Housing, Children & Young People’s Services and Health & Social Care; Safer Bristol, Avon and Somerset Probation, Voscur, and representatives from the Bristol Supported Housing Forum (who are present only for the non-‘commercially sensitive’ parts of the meeting). The Board is chaired by the Service Director for Strategic Housing.

The PHS does not control the use of resources around preventing homelessness and early intervention, but it does decide the priorities which BCC and its’ partners need to pursue and the outcomes they seek to deliver.

¹ Homes4Bristol is a high level, multi interest partnership (private landlords, developers etc.) including the council which works to improve housing outcomes in the city

	High	Medium	Low
2. Could this be relevant to our public sector equality duty to: a) Promote equality of opportunity b) Eliminate discrimination c) Promote good relations between different equalities communities?	Yes Yes	Yes	
If you have answered 'low relevance' to question 2, please describe your reasons			
3. Could the proposal have a positive effect on equalities communities?			
Please describe your initial thoughts as to the proposal's positive impact			
<p>The PHS has been described as both overarching and 'overpinning' – it provides the structure and direction so that services around preventing homelessness can have the same priorities and work towards the same explicit outcomes for clients. Each review whether it's a review of high support hostels or of the council's in-house services, or the action plan around youth homelessness will explicitly considers access and service suitability for equalities groups.</p> <p>The process which has informed this PHS is essentially a 'review of reviews' where the more detailed reviews e.g. of high support hostels does the really detailed analysis of services.</p> <p>The PHS and more directly the reviews that inform it identify gaps/shortfalls that currently exist in provision and prevention and seek to provide a coordinated response to plugging the gaps by ensuring that all partners are working towards the same common priorities and outcomes.</p> <p>People experiencing homelessness are often amongst the most marginalised in society. The trigger factors for homelessness are often related to equalities characteristics e.g. disability, age, gender (domestic abuse), etc.</p> <p>All services that the council provides directly and all those it commissions are being reviewed. These reviews are not part of the PHS project but they directly inform it. Within each review an EqIA process is undertaken to ensure that services are accessible to the range of equalities groups. It is at this individual review level rather than at this 'strategy' level that the data collected is examined. That said the amount of equalities data collected in specific areas is poor and a recommendation of the PHS is to improve it.</p> <p>Each of the commissioning reviews (of mainly externally provided but BCC funded services), includes an EqIA recommended how providers can ensure services are accessible and how to improve monitoring.</p> <p>A major review of all the BCC (directly provided) services – the Homelessness, Advice and Prevention Review (HAPR) also has its own EqIA. One of the review's aims is to substantially improve monitoring of clients to ensure better services. Crucially this will also improve BCC's understanding of any equality issues.</p> <p>The EqIAs of reviews which influence the PHS and this EqIA are listed at Appendix</p>			

1.

In summary this PHS is informed by all the projects, services, reviews etc. going on around homelessness and needs to be seen in the context of those.

But the officers and agencies involved with preventing homelessness reviews feel the old PHS 2008-13 is now out of date and is not providing the clear strategic direction the various services involved in homelessness require. Plus it's our statutory duty to have a homelessness strategy. A key purpose of the PHS is to put in place the required vision and strategic context for future commissioning and for the provision of in-house services – so that internal and external service providers alike, are clearly focused on the aims, priorities, actions and outcomes to be achieved.

Whilst Bristol's approach to preventing homelessness is generally well regarded and the city has 'bucked the trend' in not seeing as great an increase in homelessness as in other cities (as yet); it is vital that the PHS guides priorities and approach. **This EqlA stresses the importance of making sure services can reach all the groups they need to and are attuned to different needs of equalities communities.**

Effects of the PHS are likely to be positive: one purpose of the PHS is to look for gaps and shortfalls – e.g. types of service users that might be adversely affected by being unable to access homelessness services particularly in the light of the expected increase in demand for services.

Could the proposal have a negative effect on equalities communities?

No, not aware of any likely negative effects of the PHS.

Please describe your initial thoughts as to the proposal's negative impact

I don't think there are any negative impacts at this strategic level.

If the proposal has low relevance and you do not anticipate it will have a negative impact, please sign off now. Otherwise proceed to complete the full equalities impact assessment

Service director.....Equalities officer

Date

Step 2	Describe the Proposal
2.1	<p>Briefly describe the proposal and its aims? What are the main activities, whose needs is it designed to meet, etc.</p> <p>As in 1 above see also the full PHS appended.</p>
2.2	<p>If there is more than one service^{2*} affected, please list these:</p> <p>Homelessness/housing advice (mediation); commissioning of homelessness services; accessing emergency housing and housing in the private rented sector (PRS) to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Homelessness work cuts across the work of a number of council departments but also services provided by other statutory agencies e.g. Probation, the National Health Service.</p> <p>In addition many services provided by external, mainly voluntary sector agencies not commissioned by BCC e.g. independent advice agencies</p> <p>See Appendix A (below) for list of reviews/projects which inform the PHS and have or will have EqIAs.</p>
2.	<p>Which staff or teams will carry out this proposal?</p> <p>The main BCC teams affected by the PHS are:</p> <p>The three 'homelessness' teams in the Housing Solutions section (these are the teams within the remit of the HAPR see Appendix 1) and the Commissioning and Policy Team which commissions external, homelessness related services, both are in BCC's Strategic Housing Division.</p> <p>Also various third sector agencies commissioned to provide services by BCC.</p> <p>Other than that BCC can only influence and encourage the related services provided, but this up-to-date PHS with a clear focus on priorities and outcomes can help to ensure all stakeholders know what Bristol wants to achieve around homelessness.</p>

² Service/s is used as 'shorthand' for services, strategies, policies, procedures, contracts, reviews, programmes or projects.

Step 3**Current position: What information and data by equalities community do you have on service uptake, service satisfaction, service outcomes, or your workforce (if relevant)?**

Monitoring of those accepted as homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 is shown in Tables 2, 3 and 5 of Annexe 4 of the PHS. Disability, age and ethnicity are all covered.

Of course BCC wants to prevent as many households as possible having to reach the stage of it having to invoke its statutory responsibility. So the vast majority of clients thankfully never get to the stage of having to be accepted as homeless as their homelessness has been prevented before that, often by intervention with their landlord/family or by being found a tenancy in the private rented sector (PRS).

For all those households seeking housing advice this is an area where initial services are provided by the Customer Service Points and Customer Service (call) Centre. A major review is underway, the aforementioned Homelessness Advice and Prevention Review (HAPR) it will look at all the in-house homelessness services as well as the interface with the CSPs and CSC. For more on the aims of the HAPR see Appendix 1 and page 15 of the PHS.

An express aim of that review is to improve monitoring and tracking of all those approaching BCC and relevant partner agencies for homelessness, (related) advice and (homelessness) prevention services. Not only will this provide a better service as clients don't have to repeat information to different agencies it also aim to substantially improve the equalities info BCC holds about these clients who don't (fortunately) have to reach the stage of a statutory homelessness assessment. Annexe B graphs 2 - 4.

All housing support services commissioned and funded by BCC (mainly through the former Supporting People (SP) route) have good equalities monitoring info because as they are newly commissioned they are contracted to provide full equalities data on service users. There is also monitoring developed through the SP programme and/or the Housing Support Register which manages access to housing with support especially for single people.

Commissioning reviews are not 'one-off' exercises they are 'living' and on-going as the new PHS will be. They are subject to six-monthly reviews which include ensuring data collection which explicitly includes equalities monitoring is a happening, is improving and not having adverse impacts for equalities groups.

We will include in the PHS Action Plan that six-monthly monitoring must be reported to the PHB and this will included any equalities concerns. Regular monitoring reports also go to the Assistant Mayor with responsibility for this area and the Health & Wellbeing Board have asked to be kept informed on delivery of the PHS

You need to describe your current position (As Is) so you can benchmark the impact of your proposal.

In Step 3 we are asking you to record the % of people from equalities communities who are currently benefiting from your service^{3*}. Then we will ask you to compare these figure to the % of people from equalities communities in Bristol (or in the relevant wards if it is a local service) and evaluate whether any equalities groups are under or over represented in your service user profile, employee profile, service outcomes and/or satisfaction rates

The following information may be helpful:

- Equalities data for staff by divisions - [N/A to this project](#)
- Equalities data for different service areas – [see Step 3 which is explains for this project that data held under a number of related, service specific review EqlAs](#)

3.1	<p>Summarise how equalities communities are currently benefiting from your service^{*4} here (& add an electronic link to the information if possible). This level of detail is in the service specific review EqlAs</p>
3.2	<p>Then compare to the relevant benchmark (eg. the % of people from each community who use your services* with the % of people within the relevant equalities community who live in your local area or in the city of Bristol). As above</p>
3.3	<p>Evaluate what the data in 3.1 & 3.2 tells you about how the current position affects people from equalities communities (see Guidance for further information and examples). As above</p>

Please note, your evaluation in 3.3 will be built upon in Step 5 where you will set out what you plan to do to address any issues for equalities communities

³ Service/s is used as 'shorthand' for services, strategies, policies, procedures, contracts, reviews

⁴

Step 4	Ensure adequate consultation is carried out on the proposal and that all relevant information is considered and included in the EqlA
<p>This section refers to the proposal as described in step 2. When we propose changes to services*, it is important that we consult with service users, and staff or equalities community groups where relevant. Your proposal may be based on service users' suggestions that have been made in the past.</p>	
4.1	<p>Describe any consultations that have taken place on the proposal. Please include information on when you consulted, how many people attended, and what each equalities community had to say (& provide a web link to the detailed consultation if possible).</p> <p>Early on in the project a diverse range of 200 agencies with an interest in homelessness (on BCC's Commissioning & Policy Team's database) were e-mailed to ask their views for an initial partner expectations survey.</p> <p>There were replies to survey from: A housing association Three voluntary agencies (1 x supported housing (SH) /mental health; 1 x SH/youth; 1 x Drugs) Two officers within BCC Strategic Housing in personal capacity BCC Children & Young People Services A childrens centre Bristol Offender Accommodation Forum</p> <p>A summary paper of the comments at this stage is available and informed the PHS especially the emerging Action Plan.</p> <p>In June 2013 a Draft PHS was posted on Consultation Finder for 12 weeks. At this stage the same database as above were informed plus the Homes4Bristol Partnership, the six Equalities Fora, Advice Centres for Avon, Bristol Supported Housing Forum and Bristol Housing Partnership (housing associations).</p> <p>Replies from: Bristol Offender Accommodation Forum Bristol Drugs Project BCC Welfare Rights & Money Advice Team One25 Ltd One individual respondent Bristol Older People's Forum * Multi-Faith Forum * Womens' Voice * *At a meeting for all Equalities Fora.</p> <p>Points raised from this consultation will be in the 'You said, we did' report which summarises consultation generated during the 12 weeks on Consultation Finder. The face-to-face meeting with three of the council</p>

Step 4	Ensure adequate consultation is carried out on the proposal and that all relevant information is considered and included in the EqIA
	supported Equalities Fora was especially useful and points were raised for the fora not present.
4.2	Please include when and how the outcome of the consultation was fed back to the people whom you consulted. Once the 'You said, we did' report is complete it will be appended to this EqIA, the PHS and fed back to consultees.
Please note details of the consultation findings in 4.1 will be built upon in Step 5 where you will set out what you plan to do to address any issues for equalities communities.	

Step 5	Giving due regard to the impact of your proposal on equalities communities
<p>In this section you will consider the impact of your proposal on equalities communities, this will help you to develop a comprehensive service* which considers the needs of all communities.</p> <p>The public sector equality duty requires us give due regard to the need to promote equal opportunities (create positive impacts where possible) eliminate discrimination (mitigate negative impacts where possible) and foster good relations. The process of giving due regard means that you should include all identified impacts, whether or not you plan to take actions to address these</p> <p>Possible Impact column: Consider how the suggested changes in your proposal could affect different equalities communities, including how the proposal will meet the differing needs of equalities communities.</p> <p>Actions to be included in the Proposal column: Include what you intend to do about the impact, ideally your actions will maximise opportunities to make improvements for equalities communities and mitigations for any negative impacts.</p> <p>In this section you need to build on your data and consultation findings in steps 3 and 4. You may need also to consider people who could have high or differing needs within a wider equalities community such as children in care, carers, people who do not speak English, Gypsies and Travellers etc.</p>	

Possible Impact on Equalities Communities, whether or not you will address the impact	Actions to be included in the proposal
	<p>Here are some examples from the PHS of sensitivity to equalities issues. Part of the role of strategy is to make sure those groups needing services that may not have been getting services or consistent services, do so in future. Equalities characteristics can be triggers for homelessness e.g. LGBT⁵ young people asked to leave home, people evicted because of arrears where this is exacerbated by physical or mental ill health.</p> <p>The PHS has identified a number of areas where equalities groups may not be accessing the service they require. These are likely to be in the PHS Action Plan to be monitored and progressed. Also in the Action Plan is likely to be a commitment to a six-monthly monitoring of data including equalities data. The [AP] symbol means it's also likely to be in the PHS Action Plan. Action Plan will not be finalised until after BCC budget setting in Feb 2014.</p>
<p>Age After a period in which youth homelessness fell it has recently started to rise again (in terms of absolute numbers not the % of those accepted). The council is a corporate parent to 16/17 year old and care leavers.</p> <p>We feel some older homeless people with on-going support needs (e.g. with alcohol abuse issues) need some specialist approaches/</p>	<p>One of the more explicit 'recommendations' of the PHS is to make a priority effort to tackle homelessness among young people because 'catching them young' is likely to avoid a cycle of homelessness. But this is not an explicit instruction to favour services for young people above other groups. The multi-agency Youth Housing Delivery Group will be tasked with developing a 'sub-Action Plan' for young people linked to the PHS. [AP]</p> <p>The city's youth services YouthLinks have been re-structured to include spotting early signs of homelessness.</p> <p>In 2008/09 young people represented 1 in 4 of those accepted as homeless as a result of prevention initiatives this is now 1 in 5 (2012/13).</p> <p>In commissioned services there are specialist young people only services as BCC are aware of the need to ensure the safety and confidence in services of these service users.</p> <p>This gap will be addressed by a specific commitment in the PHS [AP]. Service providers can be influenced by the monitoring of contracts; also this client group are likely to be within the remit of the Fulfilling Lives (Lottery) funding for those with complex needs [AP].</p>

⁵ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

Possible Impact on Equalities Communities, whether or not you will address the impact	Actions to be included in the proposal
<p>Disability</p> <p>Homelessness staff will be working with HSC staff on their 'Accommodation Strategy for people with mental health needs, learning difficulties & autism'</p>	<p>The support budget for people with learning difficulties rests with BCC's Health & Social Care (HSC) department. Referrals sometimes come through shorter term support arrangements (up to two years) administered by Neighbourhoods. These clients can then be referred for 'as long as needed' support by HSC.</p> <p>In 2008/09 14.3% of those accepted as homeless were disabled, this has reduced (2012/13) to 11.5%.</p> <p>Our monitoring in this area will be particularly vigilant as disabled people are among the groups most negatively affected by recent welfare reform.</p> <p>A likely action in the PHS is to commission an assertive engagement service will be of particular benefit to service users suffering from mental ill health [AP].</p>
<p>Ethnicity</p> <p>The council has sought to ensure that services are responsive to service users of different ethnic backgrounds: e.g. a rough sleepers outreach worker for eastern European clients</p>	<p>Finding accommodation for larger families threatened with homelessness is already difficult; welfare reform has made it more challenging. We specifically want to improve our capacity to respond and are likely to include this in our Action Plan [AP]. There are a disproportionate number of large families from ethnic minority communities e.g. a number of homelessness presentations are from asylum seekers who have been given indefinite leave to remain. Also with Romania and Bulgaria joining the EU we need to be prepared that some homelessness presentations may occur from this source. In all cases we must ensure we have the resources and skills to deal with these cases fairly, efficiently and with empathy.</p> <p>13.5% of Bristol's population are from a BME background; for those accepted as homeless in 2012/13 it is 30.8%. BCC has ethnicity info for 95% of accepted households.</p>
<p>Gender</p> <p>Again the council ensure contracts and specifications for services include the safety and confidence (in services) of women.</p>	<p>In commissioned services there are woman only services as we are aware of the need to ensure the safety and confidence woman in the services they use. However we are regularly being told there is not enough 'women only' provision. At the same time sometimes the woman only provision we have is not adequately 'taken up'. We need to explore this situation further and ensure women get services which 'work for them'. The PHS is informed by the 'Mapping Study of Services for Homeless Women in Bristol' by the University of Bristol.</p> <p>Commissioning reviews have revealed a need to ensure we improve services for survivors of sexual abuse and this is reflected in the PHS. [AP].</p>

Possible Impact on Equalities Communities, whether or not you will address the impact	Actions to be included in the proposal
Pregnancy & maternity	Specific and suitable accommodation for young parents especially young mothers is commissioned. This accommodation is accessed via the Housing & Support Register, a way of matching the best support for households.
Religion and belief	In our reviews we specify that services are able to welcome clients from any or no religious background.
Sexual orientation	In reviews of services we have asked for monitoring of sexual orientation and gender but sometimes clients do not wish to divulge this until they feel more secure. Therefore such info can be collected on an on-going basis as well. Commissioning plans have explicitly specified specialist training for staff on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues to ensure they offer the right services.
Transgender	
Any other relevant specific groups	<p>An example of another 'gap' likely to be addressed from the Action Plan [AP] is services for those excluded from some current provision because of their history & behaviour (also ex-offenders not risky enough for probation, but too risky for mainstream provision). Many of these service users have a history of mental ill health.</p> <p>A move-one policy is being developed to help more clients currently in supported accommodation (e.g. hostels) into the PRS. These clients 'may' receive some resistance from PRS providers because of their ethnicity and other equalities factors (e.g. mental health, youth). It is important we monitor the outcomes of this policy and find ways to overcome any such resistance. [AP].</p>

5.2	Next Steps
<p>In the table above you have identified ‘actions to be included in the proposal’. Some of these will be in-hand (already acknowledged and mitigating actions are underway) but some may be new.</p> <p>So that we can more clearly demonstrate what has changed as a result of this equalities impact assessment, please list below new actions identified and say when and how you will put these new actions into practice.</p> <p>The PHS has identified a number of areas where equalities groups may not be accessing the service they require. These are likely to be in the PHS Action Plan to be monitored and progressed. Also in the Action Plan will be a commitment to a six-monthly monitoring of data including equalities data.</p>	

Step 6	Meeting the aims of the public sector equality duty
<p>In this section you should summarise the relevant equality issues (including significant adverse impacts that you are unable to mitigate) and set out how consideration of the public sector equality duty aims has been taken into account in developing the proposal.</p>	
6.1	<p>Describe how, in completing steps 1-5, you have given due regard to the three aims of the public sector equality duty (a-c above)</p> <p>See 5.2 above. We are confident that individual reviews have (or will commission) the in-depth equalities monitoring we require and that the PHS has the strategic overview.</p>
<p>This section serves as an executive summary of the proposal and can be duplicated into any reports for decision-makers with an electronic link to the full equalities impact assessment (or include full EqIA as an appendix if needed).</p>	

Step 7	Monitoring arrangements
7.1	<p>If your proposal is agreed, how do you plan to measure whether it has achieved its aims as described in 2.1? Please include how you will ensure you measure its actual impact on equalities communities?</p> <p>It will be monitored through delivery of its’ Action Plan and will include six monthly monitoring of data including equalities data to the Preventing Homelessness Board of commissioned and in-house services.</p>

Step 8	Publish your EqIA
8.1	<p>Ensure the EqIA is signed off by a Service Director and the directorate equalities officer.</p> <p>Signed Service Director</p> <p>Signed: Anneke Van Eijkern Equalities Officer</p> <p>Date</p> <p>Date: 18/09/13</p>
8.2	<p>Can this EqIA can be published on the web? Yes</p> <p>If no, please explain why the proposal is confidential and cannot be published</p>
<p>Contact Communications and Marketing Team or your directorate equalities officer to arrange to publish the equalities impact assessment on the Equality and Diversity web pages.</p>	

Appendix A

Other service specific review EqIAs which have influenced this one:

Homelessness Advice and Prevention Review (HAPR)

(Covers all BCC's in-house services related to the above, plus will improve advice giving more generally and the interface between 'homelessness' services and BCC customer services outlets)

In-house services covered by HAPR: Housing and homelessness advice, emergency housing, temporary housing including 'last resort' use of Bed & Breakfast, Housing Support Register, Empty Homes Officer, access to private rented sector (deposits, bonds), hospital and prison discharge work, (landlord/tenant) tenancy relations... Also covers: advice more generally including related advice e.g. for debt.

Housing Support Register

The majority of short-term, supported housing is accessed via this register; it ensures one application accesses all the available suppliers. It allows the range of supply to be better monitored.

Commissioning Reviews:

These review those support services for homeless and other vulnerable households (mainly formerly SP funded). The aim is to commission services that are more targeted, flexible, accessible, psychologically informed and co-ordinated, including services that meet complex needs.

High support, short-term accommodation based services review

High support services (includes high support hostels) were reviewed and all new services will be in place by September 2013. An emphasis on complex needs recognises the high incidence of multiple issues and ill-health amongst existing high support hostel service users (ref: Homeless Link's Health Needs Audit). Review also informed by data from the city's JSNA⁶ and Mental Health Needs Assessment, which specifically looked at high risk communities.

Lower and Floating, short-term support review

Draft Needs Analysis (informing commissioning of) Lower Level Support Accommodation, Floating Support and integrated young parents provision has been undertaken. There will be 604 units, including young people specific, women only and generic. For family accommodation, terms are to be renegotiated with all current providers (including BCC). At times during the spring of 2013 all specialist, temporary family accommodation was full hence the use of more B&B than has been the norm.

A concern expressed in the expectations survey was the sudden withdrawal of support when clients leave supported accommodation; the commissioning agreements give providers a six week resettlement window to provide transitional support while new support arrangements kick in if needed.

⁶ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – a report which measures the health of Bristol

Other related projects with EqlAs:

‘Wraparound’ services

The commissioning plan focuses on non-accommodation based support: including funding the Compass Centre for outreach with rough sleepers, programmes to get homeless people into or more ready for work, mediation, community mentoring, preventing homelessness after domestic abuse, furniture packs; part funding the Wellbeing Service. The services commissioned dovetail with other council and partners’ services.

Mental health short-term and medium support

This commissioning review is on-going in 2013/14. Will look at any services not covered by the first two reviews.

Higher Support Young People (16-17) Commissioning plan

Safer Bristol Commissioning of Drug and Alcohol services

New contracts November 2013.

HSC Mental Health and Learning Difficulties Strategy

On-going at September 2013.

Mental Health, Learning Difficulties & HIV Floating Support Review

Move-on policy

See pages 16 and 17 of main body PHS for more detail.

Appendix 2 – Simple Guide

One page ‘Why we are Consulting’ on this DRAFT Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS). After the final PHS is agreed this will be replaced with the Executive Summary.

Why Bristol needs a new PHS:

- A new Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement for the council
- The continued economic downturn and welfare reform are expected to lead to increased calls on homelessness and housing advice services (there’s already an upward trend), so renewed emphasis on prevention approach needed
- PHS will provide vision, policy direction and prioritisation for a range of services provided either directly by BCC or by partner agencies or commissioned by BCC from external partners
- PHS includes revised aims, priorities and outcomes for homelessness and related services; makes it clear what the strategy seeks to influence
- PHS will have a SMART, fully resourced Action Plan with responsible leads (though this is not the sum of homelessness activity e.g. it will be supplemented by programme of commissioning reviews)
- PHS demonstrates how Bristol meets and exceeds the government’s ten local challenges from its ‘Making Each Contact Count’ Strategy
- Governance (see pages 4 and 12 of ‘main body’ document:
 - o regular monitoring of the delivery of the PHS’s Action Plan will be by the Preventing Homelessness Board (a sub group of Homes4Bristol);
 - o the Health and Wellbeing Board have agreed to actively support the PHS (recognition of the adverse effects on health of homelessness); and
 - o final sign-off will be by Mayor/Cabinet
- The PHS is a ‘live’, ‘rolling’ and flexible strategy and will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is still relevant
- The PHS recognises the overlapping of homelessness with a range of other issues e.g. poor physical and mental health; drug and alcohol misuse, offending, domestic abuse (see pages 14-15 ‘main body’ for common triggers of homelessness)
- Resources: PHS does not control the use of resources around preventing homelessness and early intervention, but it does decide the priorities and outcomes which BCC and its’ partners will strive towards.

The Six Priorities (more detail pages 13-21 of ‘main body’)

1. Minimise homelessness through early intervention by understanding and tackling the (often complex) reasons behind it, with special emphasis on young people.
2. 'Early Bird' - consistency of approach, timely advice and earlier referrals from all agencies, even ones not always involved with homelessness.
3. Improve: access to, the amount of, stability and quality of the Private Rented Sector (PRS); using homelessness prevention fund, myth busting and encouraging new build, leasing, licensing and accreditation.
4. Continue to assertively tackle rough sleeping; target those clients with complex, multiple needs.
5. Make more direct links between homelessness and the housing, health and wider policy agenda.
6. Ensure the right support is in place and that those ready to do so move-on promptly and reduce repeat homelessness.

Want to know more

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